

# Advance Unedited Version

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## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### Concluding observations on the initial report of Norway\*

#### I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Norway (CRPD/C/NOR/1) at its 455th and 456th meetings, held on 25 and 26 March 2019, respectively, and adopted the following concluding observations at its 471st meeting, held on 4 April 2019.
2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of Norway, which was prepared in accordance with the Committee's reporting guidelines, and thanks the State party for the written replies (CRPD/C/NOR/Q/1/Add.1) to the list of issues prepared by the Committee.
3. The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue held during the consideration of the report and commends the State party for the strength of its high-level delegation, which included representatives of the relevant government ministries and departments.

#### II. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved by the State party in implementing the Convention. In particular, it appreciates the adoption of the following legislative, policy and administrative measures:
  - (a) The enactment of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act in January 2018;
  - (b) The LGBTIQ Action Plan: Safety, Diversity, Openness (2017 – 2020), which features a programme aimed at incorporating disability, sexuality and LGBTIQ under the online service;
  - (c) The strategy to prevent hate speech (2016 – 2020), aimed at combating hate speech based on disability, among others;
  - (d) The 2018 National Inclusion Initiative, with persons with disabilities as one of the target groups;
  - (e) The establishment of the right to user-controlled personal assistance by law in the Patients' and Users' Rights Act as of 2015.

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its twenty-first session (11 March – 5 April 2019).

### III. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

#### A. General principles and obligations (arts. 1-4)

5. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The fact that the Convention has not been incorporated into the national law and the absence of comprehensive strategy and action plan for the implementation of the Convention with timelines or budgets done in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities;
- (b) The interpretative declarations made to articles 12, 14 and 25 of the Convention;
- (c) The fact that the State party has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention;
- (d) The slow progress of replacing medical model of disability with human rights model of disability;
- (e) The differences among municipalities in the services offered to the persons with disabilities;
- (f) The absence of sustainable financial support for organizations of persons with disabilities.

6. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Incorporate the Convention into the national law, revise legislation in line with the Convention and develop a comprehensive strategy and action plan with transparent and sustainable financial resources for the implementation of the Convention with clear timelines developed in close, meaningful and fully accessible consultations with organizations of persons with disabilities;**
- (b) **Consider withdrawing its interpretative declarations to articles 12, 14 and 25 of the Convention;**
- (c) **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention;**
- (d) **Adopt the human rights model of disability in all the regulations relating to the assessment of disability in accordance with the criteria and principles provided in articles 1 to 3 of the Convention;**
- (e) **Take all necessary measures to reduce differences among municipalities in the services offered to persons with disabilities through national regulations, standards and guidelines.**
- (f) **Provide sustainable financial support for organizations of persons with disabilities.**

#### B. Specific rights (arts. 5-30)

##### Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

7. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) There is an absence of effective legislation and mechanisms addressing multiple and intersectional discrimination against persons with disabilities, especially against persons with disabilities belonging to ethnic minorities;
- (b) There is poor access to legal aid in discrimination cases;
- (c) The Anti-Discrimination Tribunal has limited powers to impose restitution and compensation;

(d) Persons with disabilities with Sami background and children with disabilities from families with an immigrant background have poor access to public services because of communication problems, cultural differences and poor knowledge of the welfare system;

(e) There is no specific research on the living conditions for persons with disabilities belonging to national minorities, including Roma and Tater/Romani.

**8. The Committee, in line with its General Comment no. 6 (2018), recommends that the State party:**

(a) Adopt the necessary legal and other measures to provide for explicit protection against multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination on the basis of age, disability, national origin, sex, gender, ethnicity and migratory status, and for effective sanctions against perpetrators;

(b) Take effective measures to provide legal aid in all discrimination cases and increase the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud's resources to enable it to assist persons with disabilities with filing complaints to the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, including cases of and intersectional forms of discrimination;

(c) Amend the Anti-discrimination Act to expand the range of remedies available to complainants in disability discrimination cases before the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal;

(d) Undertake awareness-raising campaigns and training to inform indigenous persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities from ethnic minorities, and immigrants with disabilities about their rights and how to access them;

(e) Conduct a study on the living conditions of persons with disabilities belonging to minorities, such as the Roma and Tater/Romani, to design and adopt appropriate legislative, administrative and practical steps to address inequality and discrimination.

#### **Women with disabilities (art. 6)**

**9. The Committee is concerned that:**

(a) There are multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination faced by women with disabilities and the absence of measures to prevent and combat different forms of discrimination;

(b) Compared to men with disabilities, women with disabilities are less likely to be in full-time employment;

(c) Gender perspective is not included in disability studies and the rights of women and girls with disabilities are missing from gender equality and disability agendas.

**10. In line with its general comment No. 3 (2016) on women and girls with disabilities and in the view of targets 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen measures to address multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities and, in particular:**

(a) Implement effective legal, policy and practical measures to address multiple and intersectional discrimination;

(b) Take specific measures to promote full-time employment opportunities in public and private sector for women with disabilities, including by improving their access to education, skills development and life-long learning with the active involvement of employers;

(c) Mainstream the gender perspective in disability studies and the rights of women and girls with disabilities in gender equality and disability agendas.

### **Children with disabilities (art. 7)**

11. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The insufficient recognition of the principle of the best interests of the child in the Education Act, beyond the Act's chapter on school environment and bullying, and the Patient's and Users' Act;
- (b) The institutionalization of children with disabilities;
- (c) The unequal access to treatment, care and other opportunities for children with disabilities of migrant or refugee parents, children with disabilities with Sami background, children with disabilities belonging to national minorities, including Roma and Tater/Romani;
- (d) The absence of accessible mechanisms to ensure the rights of children with disabilities to be heard, to have their views taken into account on matters pertaining to them, particularly in education, beyond the issue of school environment and bullying, to participate in decision-making processes affecting their lives, respecting their evolving capacities, as well as the lack of accessible complaints.

12. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Incorporate the principle of the best interests of the child in all legislation, and judicial and administrative decision-making procedures affecting children, including the Educational Act, beyond the Act's chapter on school environment and bullying, and the Patients' and Users' Act;**
- (b) **Take measures to ensure the right of children with disabilities to be cared for by family, alternative care within the wider family or within the community in a family setting;**
- (c) **Take account of all children with disabilities in legislation, policies and measures under the principle of equal opportunities and community inclusion, paying particular attention to children with disabilities of migrant or refugee parents, children with disabilities with Sami background, children with disabilities belonging to national minorities, including Roma and Tater/Romani;**
- (d) **Promote comprehensive strategies and accessible mechanisms for the full and effective participation of children with disabilities in decision-making processes affecting their lives, ensuring their right to have their views taken into account on matters pertaining to them, particularly in education, beyond the issue of school environment and bullying, respecting their evolving capacities and ensuring that they have access to accessible and child-friendly complaints mechanisms.**

### **Awareness-raising (art. 8)**

13. The Committee is concerned about the persistence of negative stereotypes, prejudices and language against persons with disabilities. The Committee is also concerned at the lack of comprehensive and innovative awareness-raising programs on the rights of persons with disabilities.

14. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities, develop and implement innovative public awareness-raising and education programs for the media, public officials, judges and lawyers, the police, social workers and the general public with the aim of raising awareness and promoting the human rights-based concept of disability, addressing negative stereotypes, prejudices and language against persons with disabilities in society including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.**

### **Accessibility (art. 9)**

15. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) The Planning and Building Act does not set deadlines and budget for implementing the universal design principle for existing buildings and modes of transport,

and that the action plan for universal design 2015-2019 also lacks clear deadlines for implementation;

(b) The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act does not contain any specific provisions on access to goods, services and information and does not cover workplaces that are not accessed by the general public;

(c) There is no law governing universal access to goods, services, information and communication services to persons with disabilities who cannot use self-service options; the regulations on the universal design of ICT are limited to enterprises aimed at the general public;

(d) There are no specific and effective measures and sanctions for the implementation of all legislation that provides for the access to the built environment and the information, communication, including information and communication technology and systems.

**16. In the light of article 9 of the Convention and its general comment No. 2 (2014), the Committee recommends that the State party, in its efforts to meet goal 9 and targets 11.2 and 11.17 of the Sustainable Development Goals:**

(a) Remove all existing barriers of access to buildings and services open or provided to public, such as transportation, information and communication services, including by promoting universal design of goods and services, Braille, subtitling, sign language interpretation, Easy Read and other alternative formats and modes of communication to foster full accessibility for persons with disabilities;

(b) Introduce regulations that set deadlines and concrete measures with earmarked funding for universal design of the existing buildings, prioritizing primary and secondary schools, and modes of transport in the Action Plan for Universal Design 2015-2019;

(c) Take legislative and practical measures to guarantee access to goods, services, information and communication services to persons with disabilities who cannot use self-service options and ensure that the obligation of universal design principle applies also to workplaces that are not accessed by the general public;

(d) Revise the regulation on the universal design of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) by requiring all enterprises that serve the general public to provide individualized services to persons with disabilities when required to ensure accessibility of information and communications, including ICTs;

(e) Take specific and effective measures and sanctions for the implementation of all legislation that provides for the access to the built environment and the information, communication, including information and communication technology and systems.

#### **Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)**

17. The Committee is concerned about the disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities in situations of risk and emergencies, and about the absence of comprehensive policies related to disaster risk reduction that include persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the planning, implementation and monitoring processes of national disaster risk reduction strategies.

**18. The Committee recommends that the State party, in accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, through active consultations with representative organisations of persons with disabilities:**

(a) Develop an emergency information and warning system that is fully available, free and accessible, throughout the State party for all persons with disabilities regardless of impairment;

(b) Adopt a comprehensive disaster risk reduction strategy that guarantees the accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all situations of risk.

### **Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)**

19. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The substituted decision-making regime has not been yet replaced with supported decision-making alternatives, including for persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities;

(b) Despite some improvements, the county governors do not sufficiently carry out supervision of the guardians and also still lack sufficient knowledge of the human rights model of disability and the respect of full legal capacity of persons with disabilities in order to train guardians;

(c) The lack of training for persons receiving support so that they can decide when less support is needed or when they no longer require support in the exercise of their legal capacity.

**20. Recalling its general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law, the Committee recommends the State party to:**

(a) **Given that the Guardianship Act is under revision, consider systemic change by replacing the terminology of “guardianship” and the concept of substituted decision making with supported decision making for all persons with disabilities regardless of supported requirements;**

(b) **Repeal all discriminatory provisions under the Guardianship Act that deny legal capacity based on impairment and ensure that no person is placed under guardianship against his/her will, regardless of impairment, and increase training about the recognition of full legal capacity of all persons with disabilities;**

(c) **Establish a legal procedure aimed at restoring the full legal capacity of all persons with disabilities, and ensure that the supported decision making mechanisms respect autonomy, will and preferences of the person concerned;**

(d) **Create and consistently implement appropriate and effective safeguards monitored and supervised at the county level for the exercise of legal capacity to ensure the respect of the person’s rights, will and preferences;**

(e) **Strengthen capacity building activities for public officials, including county governors and guardians, on the right to equal recognition before law of persons with disabilities and supported decision-making arrangements and for persons receiving support so that they can decide when less support is needed or when they no longer require support in the exercise of their legal capacity.**

### **Access to justice (art. 13)**

21. The Committee is concerned at:

(a) The lack of procedural and age-appropriate accommodation in the justice and law enforcement sector, especially for deaf or hard of hearing persons, persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities;

(b) The current legal aid system which does not provide access to free legal aid for persons with disabilities, particularly for those still living in institutions; and that education, health-care services and discrimination are not prioritized in the Legal Aid Act.

**22. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure procedural and age-appropriate accommodation in the justice and law enforcement sector;**

(b) **In the process of revision of its current legal aid scheme, ensure the provision of free legal aid for persons with disabilities, including for those still living in institutions and ensure that education, health-care services and discrimination are prioritized in the Legal Aid Act;**

(c) **Adhere to article 13 of the Convention in the implementation of target 16.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

**Liberty and security of the person (art. 14)**

23. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) Legal provisions, including in the Mental Health Act, Patients' and the Users' Rights Act and the Health and Care Services Act, allowing for deprivation of liberty and non-consensual treatment and restraint of persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities;
- (b) The use of coercion such as restraints, isolation, segregation, involuntary treatment, and other intrusive methods, for persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities;
- (c) The use of coercion and force against persons with intellectual disability and the lack of qualified personnel.

24. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) In line with Guidelines on article 14, repeal all legal provisions allowing for involuntary deprivation of liberty on the basis of perceived or actual impairment, and forced treatment of persons with psychosocial or intellectual disability, and provide effective remedies to persons with disabilities deprived of their liberty on the basis of actual or perceived impairment;
- (b) Prevent the use of coercion, such as restraints, isolation, segregation, involuntary treatment, and other intrusive methods, for persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, including through training of staff, prioritizing alternative and non-intrusive methods, as well as strengthening procedural guarantees and control;
- (c) Revise the use of coercion and force against among others, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities in detention, older persons, especially those with dementia, in nursing homes, and ensure that decisions on the use of coercion and force against these individuals are taken only by qualified health care personnel in accordance with stringent criteria, subject to adequate legal safeguards, and with due respect to the right to self-determination;
- (d) The Committee further calls upon the State party to be guided by its obligations under article 14 of the Convention, and the Committee's guidelines on Article 14 of the Convention (see A/72/55, annex I), throughout the regional discussions concerning an Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine: Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (ETS No 164).

**Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art.15)**

25. The Committee notes that the State party is assessing the use electroconvulsive treatment. It is concerned that:

- (a) Involuntary administration of electroconvulsive treatment is governed by guidelines and not formally adopted law;
- (b) There is insufficient information and possibilities for persons with disabilities to lodge complaints against their treatment and the fear of retribution if they do so.

26. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Incorporate into law the abolition of the enforced administration of intrusive and irreversible treatments, such as electroconvulsive therapy;
- (b) Establish clear and effective procedural safeguards for persons with disabilities, including provisions in law for supported decision-making and effective complaints mechanisms, and ensure persons' with disabilities effective access to legal advice, including free legal aid, as well as obligatory information about this right.

### **Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art. 16)**

27. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The absence of training for families, caregivers, health personnel and law enforcement officials on recognising all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse against persons with disabilities;
- (b) Cases of violence, including sexual violence, abuse and exploitation against persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities, that often go unreported and without reparation and the lack of specific measures to protect women and girls with disabilities, especially those with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities from gender-based violence;
- (c) A high number of persons with disabilities who are subjected to bullying, hate speech and hate crimes, which are often neither identified nor investigated as hate crimes.

28. **The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to:**

- (a) **Provide regular training for families, caregivers, health personnel and law enforcement officers on recognising all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse;**
- (b) **Conduct investigations into all allegations of violence and abuse, including sexual abuse, of persons with disabilities, especially gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities, particularly those with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and impose appropriate sanctions, and that victims have access to services and information, complaint mechanisms and reparation and ensure that victims have access to immediate protection and support services including mainstream services and shelter facilities, without discrimination, including individualized supports to prevent the denial of reasonable accommodation;**
- (c) **Take all measures necessary to prevent persons with disabilities from being subjected to bullying, hate speech and hate crimes and ensure that the law enforcement and judicial system identify, investigate and sanction the hate crimes against persons with disabilities.**

### **Protecting the integrity of the person (art.17)**

29. The Committee is concerned that persons with disabilities, including women and children, reportedly continue to be subjected to involuntary medical treatment, including forced abortion and sterilization.

**30. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt effective measures to ensure respect for the right to provide informed and prior consent of the person with disabilities, particularly women and children, to medical treatment, including abortion and sterilization, regardless of the severity and type of impairment; and to provide efficient support mechanisms for decision-making.**

### **Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)**

31. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The lack of an action plan for deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities with clear timelines and budget, and the emphasis of resettlement of persons with disabilities in shared housing instead of full independent living arrangements;
- (b) The insufficient efforts to provide resources for the development of support services, user-controlled personal assistance services in particular, in municipalities;
- (c) The existing regulative framework permitting for coercive health care and drug rehabilitation;
- (d) The fact that persons who are deaf or hard of hearing do not always receive the interpreting services outside of office hours.

32. With reference to the Committee's general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Develop, implement and provide adequate human, financial and technical resources for an effective deinstitutionalization plan, particularly for implementing the transformation to independent living conditions, with a clear timeframe and benchmarks, involving persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in all stages;
- (b) Adopt the necessary measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have a legal entitlement to a sufficient personal budget for independent living, which takes into account the additional costs related to disability and, at the same time, redirect resources from institutionalization to community-based services, while increasing the availability of personal assistance;
- (c) Adopt legal and practical measures to end coercive measures in health and care services, taking into account the committee's assessment due in June 2019;
- (d) Provide adequate human and financial resources to provide deaf and hard of hearing persons interpreting services when needed, including outside of office hours.

#### **Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information (art. 21)**

33. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The insufficient provision of information and communication in accessible formats and technologies, such as Easy Read, plain language, captioning, sign language, Braille, and audio-description, particularly in official interactions;
- (b) The lack of accessibility of most television live broadcast and mass media;
- (c) The Broadcasting Act that only requires commercial television broadcasters with more than five percent viewers to caption their broadcasts for a limited time from 6pm to 11pm.

34. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Increase the provision of accessible information and communication formats and assistive technologies available, which are appropriate for persons with disabilities, including web accessibility, sign language, captioning, Braille, Easy Read and plain language in relation to all public services;
- (b) Increase the accessibility in mass media, particularly in live broadcasting;
- (c) Strengthen requirements of the Broadcasting Act to ensure captioning of all broadcasters at all times.

#### **Respect for home and the family (art. 23)**

35. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) The State party does not provide adequate support for parents with disabilities to bring up their children and exercise their parental responsibilities;
- (b) One of the factors contributing to children being separated from parents and being placed in care homes or being taken by child welfare services, is their own or their parents' disability.

36. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure that accessible and inclusive community support and safeguard mechanisms are available for parents with disabilities to exercise parental responsibilities;
- (b) Take measures to ensure explicitly in the law the prohibition of the removal of children from their parents on the basis of their parents' or their own disability.

### **Education (art. 24)**

37. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The lack of an effective legal mechanism, including anti-discrimination provisions to ensure that persons with disabilities can access inclusive education without discrimination, including the denial of reasonable accommodation, in public and private schools;
- (b) The lack of standards that outline the process for the provision of individualised supports in education, including the provision of assistants and support staff;
- (c) Many children with disabilities not receiving an adequate standard of education and have low learning outcomes; a large proportion of special education services are provided by unskilled assistants and by teachers without the appropriate training;
- (d) The lack of accessible complaint mechanisms for children with disabilities and the lack of sanctions for non-compliance;
- (e) Many students with disabilities do not receive adequate training in basic skills, such as social development and communication skills, which will enhance greater learning capacities in the most suitable environment.

**38. In line with the Committee's general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and targets 4.5 and 4.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Strengthen anti-discrimination provisions to explicitly cover disability-based discrimination on the ground of education, including the provision of an accessible and effective complaints mechanism;**
- (b) **Adopt national standards for the provision of effective individualised support measures in mainstream education, and allocate sufficient financial and human resources to ensure that persons with disabilities receive the support required to facilitate inclusive education;**
- (c) **Ensure all teachers have the appropriate skills for individualized instruction and ensure that individualized support measures do not entail costs for parents of children with disabilities;**
- (d) **Introduce legislation based on the human rights model of disability that fully complies with article 24 to ensure inclusive and quality education for all children;**
- (e) **Take measures to guarantee that students with disabilities receive training in necessary skills to enhance their learning capability in the environment adapted to suit their specific requirements within inclusive education system.**

### **Health (art. 25)**

39. The Committee is concerned about the lack of:

- (a) Awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities among medical professionals and that health-care services and facilities remain largely inaccessible and unavailable to persons with disabilities, including for persons with disabilities still living in institutions;

- (b) Accessibility of information on medical services and facilities, particularly relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights, for women with disabilities.

**40. The Committee recommends that the State party adhered to article 25 of the Convention in its efforts to achieve targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals and:**

- (a) **Strengthen measures to ensure the accessibility of health-care services and facilities in the community, including to persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities and those that require extensive support, and provide information in accessible formats;**

(b) Raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities among medical professionals;

(c) Take measures to provide persons with disabilities, especially women, with information in accessible formats, on accessible health-care services and facilities, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

#### Work and employment (art. 27)

41. The Committee is concerned that the efforts to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the open labour market have been limited and of little impact and that intersectional inequalities persist. It is also concerned at the perseverance of discrimination based on disability, including denial of reasonable accommodation.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with organisations of persons with disabilities, adopt measures to increase the level of employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, in line with the Convention and in view of target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and that it ensure the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. It also recommends that the State party:

(a) Combat stereotypes and prejudice towards persons with disabilities in the labour market and adopt regulations governing disability-based discrimination including denial of reasonable accommodation;

(b) Set out a requirement of universal design in the workplace for employers in the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act; prepare and implement a strategy on accessibility through universal design of the physical environment and universal ICT in working life;

(c) Ensure that the requirement of active, targeted and systematic efforts is enforced to promote employment of persons with disabilities in the private and public labour markets;

(d) Give clear mandate and sufficient resources to the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration to facilitate employment opportunities for persons with disabilities who are interested in entering the labour market;

(e) Consider extending the target that five percent of new employees in the public sector should be persons with disabilities also to private sector.

#### Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)

43. The Committee is concerned that existing financial support schemes are insufficient to guarantee an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and to cover additional disability-related costs.

44. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that social protection policies and programmes secure the necessary and sufficient income levels by taking into account the additional costs faced by persons with disabilities.

#### Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

45. The Committee is concerned that voting procedures, facilities and materials are not accessible. The Committee is also concerned about the low rates of representation and participation of persons with disabilities in elections and their low representation in elected and appointed bodies.

46. The Committee recommends that the State party, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities:

(a) Ensure that electoral procedures, facilities and materials are inclusive of and accessible to all persons with disabilities, including materials in sign language, Braille and Easy Read and consider introducing accessible electronic voting;

**(b) Promote the participation of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, in political life and public decision-making with measurable targets and indicators.**

**Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (art. 30)**

47. The Committee is concerned that persons with disabilities, children in particular, face barriers to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport on an equal basis with others. It is also concerned that the State party has not yet ratified the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.

**48. The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary steps to secure and promote inclusive and accessible facilities for recreational, leisure and sporting activities, including UNESCO World Heritage sites, providing equal access and ensure the participation of persons with disabilities, particularly children. It also encourages the State party to promptly ratify the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.**

**C. Specific obligations (arts. 31-33)**

**Statistics and data collection (art. 31)**

49. The Committee is concerned at the lack of consistent statistics on persons with disabilities and the lack of human rights indicators in the available data, which makes it difficult for the State party to develop appropriate policies. The Committee is also concerned about the limited extent to which disability-related indicators are effectively applied in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**50. In view of target 17.18 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Rely on the methodology of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics to collect, analyse and disseminate data on its population disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, type of impairment, socioeconomic status, employment, barriers encountered and place of residence, and data on cases of discrimination or violence against persons with disabilities;**

**(b) Develop evidence-based policies to respond to the situation of persons with disabilities, in consultation with their representative organizations.**

**International cooperation (art. 32)**

51. The Committee notes that the State party introduced the disability marker in 2018 in its international cooperation activities. However, it is concerned at the lack of information about the effective involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities as development cooperation partners.

**52. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt measures to ensure full and effective participation, inclusion and consultation with persons with disabilities through their representative organisations in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects developed in international cooperation efforts in line with the Committee's General Comment No. 7 (2018).**

## IV. Follow-up

### Dissemination of information

53. The Committee emphasises the importance of all recommendations contained in the present concluding observations and would like to draw the attention of the State Party to the recommendations contained in paragraph 6 and paragraph 20.

54. The Committee recommends that the State party transmit the present concluding observations for consideration and action to members of the Government and parliament, officials in relevant ministries, the judiciary and members of relevant professional groups, such as education, medical and legal professionals, as well as to local authorities, the private sector and the media, using modern social communication strategies.

55. The Committee strongly encourages the State party to involve civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, in the preparation of its periodic report.

56. The Committee requests that the State party disseminate the present concluding observations widely, including to non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities, and to persons with disabilities themselves and members of their families, in national and minority languages, including sign language, and in accessible formats, and to make them available on the government website on human rights.

### Next periodic report

57. The Committee requests the State party to submit its second periodic report by 3 July 2027 and to include in them information on the implementation of the recommendations made in the present concluding observations. The Committee also requests the State party to consider submitting the above-mentioned reports under the Committee's simplified reporting procedure, according to which the Committee prepares a list of issues at least one year prior to the due date set for the report of a State party. The replies of a State party to such a list of issues constitute its report.

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