



## EU Task Group Position Paper

### UN CRPD Concluding Observations to the European Union

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) is a human rights treaty that aims to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities. Equality and non-discrimination as well as combating harmful disability stereotypes and prejudices are enshrined within the Convention. According to the World Report on Disability<sup>1</sup>, 15% of the world population are persons with disabilities and 80% of these people live in low-income countries. Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of disability: on the one hand, poverty is a barrier to accessing basic social services, such as nutrition and health, and this can lead to disability; on the other hand, persons with disabilities may face additional disability-related costs, higher rates of unemployment and lower incomes, which can put them at higher risk of financial hardship; this is true not only for persons living with disabilities, but also for their families and wider communities. In addition, mainstream policies and programmes are not always accessible to persons with disabilities: this is a missed opportunity, since disability-inclusive policies and programmes will benefit society as a whole, and not only persons with disabilities.

The EU is the biggest donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the first regional integration organisation to sign and ratify a human rights treaty, this is the case of the UN CRPD. The EU promoted the rights of persons with disabilities during the negotiation and adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UN CRPD must be used as a framework to implement the 2030 Agenda by leaving no one behind, in particular persons with disabilities. The EU review on the implementation of the UN CRPD by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities culminated with the adoption of Concluding Observations, which will provide key recommendations on the how the EU can further implement the UN CRPD.

The International Disability and Development Consortium<sup>1</sup> (IDDC) welcomes these Concluding Observations<sup>2</sup>, in particular the recommendations in relation to article 11 (Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies) and article 32 (International Cooperation).

<sup>1</sup> [World Report on Disability, published by the World Health Organisation and the World Bank in 2011.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [EU Concluding Observations on the implementation of the UN CRPD](#)

The Concluding Observations offer several recommendations on changes in law, policy and programmes, the establishment of institutions or organs to ensure implementation, by which the EU will guarantee the full enjoyment of their human rights by persons with disabilities, free from discrimination.

### **How to strengthen implementation of the UN CRPD with the support of the Concluding Observations**

IDDC recognizes the support of the EU for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities at the international level, demonstrated during the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. IDDC calls upon the EU to take the lead on the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities in the implementation of these frameworks with its partner countries, regional organisations and at the global level.

The UN CRPD is a human rights treaty with binding obligations for the EU. Thus, all EU policies and programmes, both externally and internally, must comply with the UN CRPD and establish specific measures which guarantee that the rights of persons with disabilities are mainstreamed in all domains, including humanitarian and development policies and programmes. The Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015 – 2019<sup>3</sup> is a good example on how to guarantee that UN CRPD is included in mainstream policies.

In its Concluding Observations, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended the EU take the lead on disability-inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This translates into practice: the EU is required to establish a work plan with clear objectives and results, led by DG DEVCO, DG EMPL and the EEAS. This work plan has to be developed, monitored and evaluated with the support and active participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, through transparent and accessible consultations. Also, a mid-term review of the work plan should be included in order to guarantee a monitoring and evaluation mechanism and ensure EU accountability.

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) should be at the core of EU policies. Coordination and sharing knowledge and good practices among EU institutions are essential to guarantee that the 2030 Agenda and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction leave no one behind. In order to do so, it will be crucial to: a) strengthen the capacity of EU staff on the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities; b) appoint an adequate number of disability focal points in the EU Headquarters and Delegations, and c) ensure sustainable collaboration and communication among different focal points, for example, human rights and disability focal points.

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<sup>3</sup> [Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015 – 2019, published on April 2015](#)

The upcoming review of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and in particular the EU external action instruments under Heading 4, such as the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the European Development Fund (EDF), will be the first opportunity to demonstrate the EU's commitment to ensure that no one is left behind in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, the EU should ensure that all EU funded programmes and projects promote, protect and uphold the rights of persons with disabilities and are compliant with the articles of the UN CRPD.

Mechanisms to collect and monitor disaggregated data by disability, sex, age, and other characteristics have to be established<sup>4</sup>; in addition the EU should implement such mechanisms in all EU funded projects, and setup a clear timetable for producing disaggregated data across all its programmes. This is outlined in Article 31 of the CRPD and is required in both the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Accessibility of infrastructure and communications should be ensured, in EU Headquarters, EU Delegations and all new development initiatives as outlined in the UN CRPD General Comment No. 2<sup>5</sup>. In addition, persons with disabilities and their representative organisations should be regularly consulted and participate in decision-making with EU institutions, as they are key stakeholders and partners of the EU.

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#### *[' About the International Disability and Development Consortium](#)*

*The International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) is a global consortium of 27 disability and development non-governmental organisations, mainstream development organisations and disabled people's organisations (DPOs) supporting disability and development work in more than 100 countries around the world.*

*The aim of IDDC is to promote inclusive development internationally, with a special focus on promoting the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by all persons with disabilities living in low- and middle-income countries.*

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<sup>4</sup> [Following the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development target 17.18 “to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts”](#)

<sup>5</sup> [General Comment of the Committee of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on accessibility](#)