INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (ICC)

Statement of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to the Fifth Conference of State Parties of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

12 September 2012
UN Headquarters, New York
Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

I am speaking on behalf of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (the ICC), which represents more than a hundred National Human Rights Institutions around the world.

Social, economic and political disadvantages that women, children and persons with disabilities experience in everyday life are considerable. But these disadvantages are compounded when those identities are combined. Women and children with disabilities have distinct experiences and distinct needs. It is only through understanding and taking account of those differences that women and children with disabilities can be empowered as equal citizens.

National Human Rights Institutions provide a valuable and powerful mechanism for marginalised voices to be heard, and to be heeded, by those in power and in a position to help. NHRIs have a mandate to ensure that States Parties translate the aims and goals of the CRPD into action. Action that enables persons with disabilities to realise their potential and participate in all aspects of life.

Ensuring that states listen to, and meaningfully engage with, women and children with disabilities to understand their experiences, and appreciate their needs and requirements is thus a central task for NHRIs.

Our role is to urge states to act in compliance with the standards and benchmarks set out in the CRPD, to promote and educate about human rights, and monitor states to ensure that they comply with their duty as established by human rights instruments.

Combating violence against women is one of the human rights priorities being considered at the ICC’s 11th Biennial Conference from 5 - 7 November in Amman, Jordan. Women with disabilities are at greater risk of gender-based violence, but little is known about their experiences. Structural and social initiatives will improve this situation. We urge all concerned - state parties, civil society, and especially DPOs - to participate in the forthcoming conference and ensure women with disabilities voices are heard, and their demands are headed. Full details of the conference are available on the ICC webpage (http://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/default.aspx).

A fundamental principle of the Convention is respect for the evolving capacities of children. NHRIs are committed to working directly with children with disabilities. We can provide a platform to ensure children's views are listened to and that their concerns are understood and taken into account by states.

NHRIs are using innovative approaches to ensure the effective monitoring and implementation of the Convention. And we note with pleasure the July 2012 Human Rights Council resolution (Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/20/L.15). The resolution, co-sponsored by 64 states, reaffirms the role NHRIs play in promoting and protecting human rights and welcomes the contribution that NHRIs make to the work of UN mechanisms, including this Conference.
The ICC once again urges all States that have not already done so, to implement Article 33.2 of the CRPD by involving NHRIs in the independent monitoring of the Convention.

We welcome your recognition Mr President, of the participation of NHRIs at the Conference of States Parties, and your recommendation this week that the incoming bureau consider formally amending the Rules of Procedure to reflect this.

This is in line with the resolution which urges strengthened coordination between NHRIs and UN Mechanisms and states parties.

Mr President, on behalf of the ICC, I thank you for the opportunity to make this statement.