Statement
of the
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
to the
Ninth Conference of State Parties of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

14 June 2016
UN Headquarters, New York
Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

Today, I am addressing you on behalf of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI - formerly known as the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, or the ICC). GANHRI is the network that national human rights institutions - or NHRI - have created to share experiences, to support each other, and to promote the role that NHRI can play in advancing human rights. GANHRI currently represents more than 100 NHRI around the world, 72 of which are accredited as operating in full compliance with the Paris Principles.

NHRI are unique, independent bodies. They are created by States and provide an important bridge to close the implementation gap between international human rights standards and their national implementation - they are independent and expert mechanisms for the national application of international standards, with full understanding of the local context; they generally work with individual rights holders through complaints handling or monitoring; and they address structural issues through investigatory and advisory functions.

NHRI are thus ideally suited to help transform the words of the CRPD into practical action at the domestic level.

They are also well-positioned to provide the Conference of State Parties unique insight into the implementation and monitoring of the CRPD. GANHRI appreciates your leadership as President and the efforts of past Bureaus in ensuring an effective role for GANHRI, its regional networks and accredited NHRI in the work of the Conference of State Parties. The General Assembly, in its most recent resolution relating to NHRI, called on UN bodies, including the Conference of State Parties, to further enhance the participation of NHRI compliant with the Paris Principles and to allow for their contribution to these United Nations mechanisms and processes. GANHRI wishes to encourage the Conference of State Parties to consider the enhancement of the participation of NHRI in its work, both individually and collectively through the participation of GANHRI and its regional networks.

Mr. President,

GANHRI welcomes the adoption by United Nations Members States of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda constitutes a transformational framework applicable to all countries, which unites the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development. It is comprehensive and sets ambitious goals for the range of issues that affect people and the planet. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets directly or indirectly reflect human rights standards and integrate cross-cutting human rights principles such as participation, accountability and non-discrimination.

The eradication of poverty and the realisation of human dignity are among the key objectives of the SDGs. Too often, disability and poverty go hand-in-hand. The lack of employment opportunities, the failure of employers to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities, inaccessible transportation and buildings, inadequate health and social support systems - these factors lead to a mutually reinforcing loop from which it is often difficult to break free. Children with disabilities, especially those with mental disabilities, require equal opportunities for
education and skills for a full and effective participation and inclusion in society. At present, this is not the case in large parts of the world.

NHRIs in all regions of the globe are already addressing these and other issues of crucial importance to the Agenda in their work. They have a vital role to play in ensuring that the objectives of the SDGs are realized, as outlined in the 2015 Mérida Declaration emanating from the 12th international conference of NHRIs.

Mr. President,

“Nothing about us without us” inspired the work of those drafting the CRPD. As we mark the 10th anniversary of the CRPD, the international community of people with disabilities should be commended for their efforts to ensure that they are not invisible in the development of protection frameworks such as the SDGs. The results have been encouraging.

NHRIs work every day on the frontlines of the struggle for equality for people with disabilities. GANHRI and its members are firmly committed to working with their respective national governments, civil society and the community of people with disabilities to help ensure that, in 2030, we can celebrate real progress for all the citizens of the world including those with disabilities. GANHRI recognises that this requires a strengthened relationship with the Conference of State Parties and thus reiterates its wish to encourage the Conference of State Parties to consider the enhancement of the participation of NHRIs, GANHRI and its regional networks in its work.

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

Prof Dr Beate Rudolf
GANHRI Chairperson and Chairperson of the German Institute for Human Rights