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

OPENING 14th SESSION OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

(17 August – 4 September)

17 AUGUST 2015

PALAIS WILSON GROUND FLOOR

ICC STATEMENT
Madame Chairperson,
Committee Members,

On behalf of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.

ICC Chairperson Adv. Mabedle Lourence Mushwana regrets not being able to join you in person and has requested me to convey to you his best wishes for a successful session.

The ICC represents more than 100 National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) worldwide, 72 of them are accredited with A status in compliance with the General Assembly endorsed UN Paris Principles for the effective functioning of National Institutions.

Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is unique in international human rights law. By providing for domestic arrangements for coordination and implementation of the Convention, it acknowledges that, as important as the work that goes on here in Geneva, it is on the domestic level, where the rhetoric of the Convention meets the road of reality. As Eleanor Roosevelt so memorably stated, it is, after all, “In small places, close to home – so close and so small that cannot be seen on any maps of the world. . . .” that universal human rights matter the most.

NHRIs which have a unique perspective on the day to day domestic human rights situations are uniquely situated to be nexus between domestic implementation and international accountability.

NHRIs can achieve this role through their diverse functions. NHRIs monitor and investigate disability rights claims often using independent complaints-handling procedures. Working closely with disabled persons organizations they advise governments on effective implementation. At the international level they are involved in the work of your Committee and other UN mechanisms such as Special Procedures and the UPR.

Article 33.2 of the Convention acknowledges the important role that can be played by NHRIs by providing that the independent monitoring mechanisms that States are required to put in place be constituted taking into account the Paris Principles. Many NHRIs have been officially designated to do monitoring pursuant to Article 33.2. Other NHRIs monitor implementation pursuant to their domestic mandates.

The Concluding Observations of your Committee have consistently urged State Parties to ensure that the monitoring mechanisms they establish are consistent with the Paris Principles, are adequately funded, and that people with disabilities are fully involved in the implementation process. The ICC commends the Committee for its support of these principles.

The ICC values the recognition the Committee has given to NHRIs in its work. The Committee has acknowledged to a great extent the work of NHRIs. Thank you for leading the way.

As you know, NHRIs currently engage independently with the Committee at all stages of the reporting process. Since 2013, NHRI engagement during the reporting process has increased by a 40% and the present session will count with the participation of 8 NHRIs from different regions and, for the first time with the participation of one of the regional networks of NHRIs.
Moving the important partnership forward, the ICC welcomes the Committee's decision - following the meeting between the committee and NHRIs in September 2014 - to develop Guidelines to formalise cooperation between NHRIs and the Committee. The ICC is currently conducting a survey, to seek and receive views from ICC members about the proposed structure and content of the Guidelines.

In October the ICC will host its 12th International Conference in Mexico on the roles of NHRIs in strengthening human rights in the context of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). NHRIs will have an important role in assisting states to develop inclusive national implementation policies for the SDGs and monitoring their implementation.

As with the SDGs, it is important that progress in implementing the Convention be measured against indicators. Several NHRIs are currently in the process of developing indicators regarding various provisions of the Convention. The ICC looks forward to sharing the outcome of these initiatives with the Committee.

A further priority for the ICC will be to consolidate the roles and participation opportunities of NHRIs with other UN mechanisms that are associated with the promotion and protection of persons with disabilities. The ICC already participates actively in the work of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention (COSP). We look forward in the future to working with COSP to formalize the role of NHRIs through amendments to the COSP Rules of Procedure.

Finally, the ICC would like to acknowledge you, Madame Chairperson, and all the members of the Committee, for the support you have given the ICC. Despite your busy schedules you have made time to contribute your wisdom and experience to our deliberations.

Madame Chair, members of the Committee, the ICC is committed to continue to build our partnership in furtherance of our common goal of a world of where the dignity, autonomy and equality of all people with disabilities will be fully realized.

Thank you.