Chairperson María Soledad Cisternas Reyes,  
Distinguished Committee Members,

The International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) appreciates this opportunity to meet with you today, to discuss opportunities for NHRIs' engagement with the work of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Committee).

The ICC welcomes the consideration that the Committee has given to the role of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) to its work, including in its rules of procedures. The ICC congratulates the Committee for its engagement with persons with disabilities and organisations representing them as well as with civil society, which are critical partners to the work of the Committee.

The ICC is the global network of NHRIs, representing more than 100 NHRIs worldwide. The ICC works to establish and strengthen NHRIs in line with the Paris Principles. It promotes and facilitates NHRI engagement with the international human rights mechanisms.

The ICC and its members recognise and value the unique role of treaty bodies in promoting and monitoring the effective implementation of universal human rights standards at national level. The ICC recognises the treaty bodies’ and particularly this Committee's invaluable contributions not least because of your legal mandates to monitor the effective implementation of universal human rights standards at the national level.

In as much as treaty bodies are indispensable for the national human rights protection system, national human rights institutions in turn can be key
partners to this Committee.

As independent institutions with a constitutional or legislative mandate to protect and promote human rights, NHRIs work to bridge the gap between international and national human rights systems, to strengthen human rights on the ground.

Independent, Paris Principles compliant national human rights institutions are a trusted source of reliable and authoritative information on national situations. They have a distinct role to play in monitoring the implementation of treaty body recommendations at national level and reporting thereon.

Thus, while the importance of the relationship between treaty bodies and NHRIs is evident, it becomes even starkly so with this Committee in particular, in light of articles 33 and 37 CRPD and the mounting number of NHRIs designated as national monitoring mechanisms.

Several NHRIs have already contributed to the work of the Committee in the context of their respective state examination and it is anticipated that the number of NHRIs engaging will increase.

Only two weeks ago, NHRIs from all regions met in Geneva at the ICC 27th annual meeting, to discuss opportunities for NHRI reporting and monitoring in the context of the Committee's work.

The ICC is delighted that the Committee is developing draft guidelines on cooperation with NHRIs and that is has scheduled a meeting with NHRIs and other national monitoring mechanisms in September this year, to focus on building capacities of these institutions and exchanging experiences and best practices.

Our meeting today is therefore very timely.

On the draft guidelines the Committee is developing, the ICC would like to offer the following suggestions, for the Committee's consideration.

First, the ICC would welcome if the Committee would take into account the unique role of NHRIs and National Monitoring Mechanisms within both the treaty body system and the domestic infrastructure. This role is grounded in the NHRIs’ mandates under the Paris Principles and more particularly in article 33 II CRPD. It is a role that is distinct from, yet complementary to, the ones of states, civil society, and DPOs.

Accordingly, the ICC would welcome NHR/NMM engagement opportunities with the Committee that are distinct from those of other actors. This would underscore their unique role and ensure that the Committee had sufficient opportunity to hear from the NHRIs/NMM during the examination process.

As independent institutions of the state, NHRIs/NMM engage with the Committee and other UN bodies in their own right, which is not subject to their
respective states’ approval. As is already the practice at the Human Rights Council and other UN treaty bodies, NHRIs/NMM should be provided with separate seating that clearly identifies them, with separate meeting time and speaking slots, and their contributions to the Committee should be clearly identified as emanating from a NHRI/NMM.

The ICC would welcome if this practice be reflected in the Committee’s prospective guidelines.

Secondly, the paper should aim at ensuring **NHRIs'NMMS' most effective participation in all stages of the Committee's work and processes.** Specific opportunities for NHRIs to contribute to, and support the work of the Committee would include all stages: pre-session Task Force; reporting; examination of sessions; and follow up; as well as NHRIs’ support to the communications procedure and to the inquiry procedure.

In particular, the ICC stresses the importance of opportunities for NHRIs/NMMs to brief the Committee at both Task Force level and prior to the examination of the state party. Such briefings provide an important and timely opportunity for the NHRI/NMM to inform and update the Committee on developments since the report has been filed and to respond to particular questions that the members may have. Ideally the briefings should be held in private meetings, be interpreted and be separate from those of other stakeholders.

In addition to these briefings, the ICC would welcome an opportunity for NHRIs/NMMs who so wish to present a statement during the public session of the state examination. As NHRIs/NMMs participate in their own right, such statement should not be subject to the concerned state's approval.

Follow up to concluding observations is a critical to help advance implementation of the Convention in country. NHRIs/NMMs could be invited by the Committee to provide written information on measures taken by the state party to implement the concluding observations. Further, for effective national-level follow up, it would be important to make publicly available the follow up responses from the state party.

The ICC would also welcome the opportunities available for NHRIs/NMMs to contribute to days of general discussion and the development of the Committee’s general comments.

Over the years, various treaty bodies have developed **best practices of cooperation with NHRI**, including the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racism and Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Committee Against Torture (CAT), and the paper on cooperation with NHRIIs recently adopted by the Human Rights Committee. These experiences may further inform the development of the Committee’s own position and working methods as they relate to NHRIs.
Thirdly, and finally, the ICC supports efforts by all treaty bodies aimed at increasing the **accessibility of the system, both in the spirit of CRPD and to all national-level stakeholders**, including persons with disabilities, civil society organisations and NHRI, including through increased information-sharing and the use of new technologies such as video conferencing when a NHRI cannot travel to Geneva.

The ICC would therefore welcome a reference to videoconferencing in the Committee’s guidelines. The ICC welcomes the support provided by the Secretariat in cooperation with the ICC Geneva Representative to facilitate NHRI/NMM interaction with the Committee’s work. This includes providing NHRI with advance notice of reporting schedules and advising them on opportunities to contribute thereto. The ICC and its Geneva Representative stand ready to continue working closely with the Secretariat to this end.

In conclusion, the ICC warmly welcomes the Committee’s commitment to strengthen its interaction with NHRI/NMMs. The ICC remains committed to supporting its members effectively contribute to the work of this Committee and looks forward to develop a strong relationship with your distinguished Committee members.