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Annual interactive debate on the rights of people with disabilities

Delivered by Brian E. Frenkel,
Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Advisor

Thank you, Mr. President.

We would like to thank the Council for organizing this Discussion. We see this topic as remarkably important and we would like to thank the distinguished panelists for their valuable contribution.

The 2030 Agenda presents a unique opportunity to reduce inequality for persons with disabilities. Equality has been established as a fundamental principle in the Israeli legal system through legislation and extensive case law. The High Court of Justice plays a leading role in the promotion of the principle of equality through the development of jurisprudence when interpreting the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty.

The Equal Rights Law addresses the issue of equality and non-discrimination both in its general provisions and its operational ones. Section 1 states that Israel's commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities is based, inter alia, on the recognition of the principle of equality; and one of the self-stated objectives of the Law is to promote the right of persons with disabilities to participate equally and actively in society in all the major spheres of life. In this vein, the Knesset plays a key role, providing a strong example on creating a proper environment for people with disabilities, and integrating them either as MKs or employees in its different departments.

Section 19F addresses discrimination in relation to the provision of public services, the operation of public places and the supply of products. Thus, anyone in these businesses is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of disability by refusing to facilitate access by persons with disabilities to a public place or part thereof, to provide them with a public service or product, or to enable them to use or enjoy a public service.

Based on the principle that inaccessible environments form barriers denying persons with disabilities full social participation and inclusion, according to the Law, Persons with disabilities are entitled to accessibility to all public places and public services and to public transportation.

With regard to employment, the Law both prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in relation to the various stages of the employment process and requires affirmative action from the employers.

Israel is a party to the CRPD and maintains an extensive system of law, regulations and policies designed to raise awareness and to find solutions to the challenges that persons with disabilities are facing, in order to ensure their full inclusion and participation in society.

Thank you.