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Item 8 – General Debate

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Thank you, Mr. President.

The Vienna Declaration is very clear when it states, “the place of persons with disabilities is everywhere. Persons with disabilities should be guaranteed equal opportunity through the elimination of all socially determined barriers (...) which exclude or restrict full participation in society.”

Notwithstanding these strong words, persons with disabilities still face discrimination, stigmatization and barriers on a daily-basis.

In 2019, the Secretary-General launched the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. Since then, all UN entities and programmes have periodically reported about their implementation. Here at the HRC, OHCHR update us on progress made and .while we are encouraged by the many achievements, we are also concerned by the many gaps that are still present.

Mr. President,

One of those gaps is in terms of accessibility. Although much has been achieved, starting with the establishment of the Task Force on Accessibility by Resolution HRC 16/21, we still see limitations, many based on budget constraints, to ensure that documentations and debates are truly accessible.

For that, Israel constantly requests that all panels are accessible, and that all reports are presented in accessible format. We cannot use the excuse of budget limitations to exclude 15% of the world’s population. We cannot limit their inclusion only to topics that includes “disabilities” in their title. Persons with disabilities are part and parcel of all our societies.

Therefore, we call upon all States, to include them in all their initiatives, to consult them, and to make sure that they can participate in all debates.

Israel will continue working towards this objective. We believe that only when we achieve it, we would be able to say that we are “leaving no one behind”.

I thank you, Mr. President.