

World Health Organization

The 148th Session of the WHO Executive Board – January 2021

Joint Statement Delivered By Israel under Agenda Item 19.3

Chair,

Distinguished colleagues,

I have the honor of speaking on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the European Union and its Member States, Iceland, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay.

We are proud to present, for the consideration of the Executive Board, a draft resolution on the Highest Attainable Standard of Health for Persons with Disabilities.

This is the first draft resolution proposed on this topic, after the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As such, it follows the path of, and builds on the same principles that the Convention had outlined: moving away from a medical approach to disabilities, and adopting a comprehensive social model, which is people centered and human rights based.

Chair,

“Nothing about us without us” is not just a catch phrase. Meaningfully involving persons with disabilities in decision making processes is a precondition for ensuring disability inclusion.

Accordingly, throughout the process of working on this resolution, we closely consulted with, and actively involved, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. This resulted in a comprehensive text which clearly sets the path for the work of the WHO on this topic for the years ahead:

- The WHO will produce a “World Report on the Highest Attainable Standard of Health for Persons with Disabilities”, in consultation with Member States and representative organizations of persons with disabilities.
- The WHO will work to fully implement the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy across all levels of the organization, and will report on its implementation to the EB Members yearly.
- It will also support the creation of a global research agenda that aligns with Universal Health Coverage, health emergencies and health and well-being, including health systems and policy research, on persons with disabilities.

We would like to thank all those who participated in the process that led to this resolution including all those Member States who engaged during negotiations with a constructive spirit. Moreover, we particularly thanks the Secretariat for its support and commitment, and to those civil society organizations who interacted with Member States to produce a groundbreaking text that will assist the organization to ensure inclusiveness and make the motto of “leaving no one behind”, a reality.

Finally, we call on WHO to continue working with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, and deepen these relations even further, to assure that their perspectives and needs are incorporated and taken into account in policy and programme work, in the HQ as well as in regional and country offices. This will be particularly important as we collectively work to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensure persons with disabilities have equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments – and are not further left behind.

I thank you for your attention.