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ITALY - HRC 4

On the occasion of the special event
on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

Thank you, Mr. President. *Alignment sentence EU.*

By adopting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the General Assembly concluded one of the most expeditiously negotiated human rights Treaty in the history of international law. In fact, this Convention was prepared in four years, between 2002 and 2006.

We are extremely happy that, in a few days from now, the first big human rights instrument of the 21st century will be opened for signature and ratification in New York.

In fact, since the 80s, a growing interest for this issue has emerged. At that time, Italy was among the first states to propose the text of a draft convention.

The Text before us, once implemented, will represent a major shift in the way the world treats the 10 % of its population, approximately 650 million of disabled people.

The newly adopted Convention represents both an opportunity to reaffirm the universal commitment to the rights and dignity of all people without discrimination and, more importantly, a key factor to provide *impetus* for a wider cultural change in the general perception of disabled people across the world.

This Convention is a forward-looking document, which focuses on the need to enable every person to contribute to the best of his/her potential and abilities. More than evoking a generic sympathy towards disabled persons, this text will be the ad hoc basis to reiterate and affirm the protection of rights of persons with disabilities and to provide them with real equal opportunities.

Under the Convention, States parties are to recognize that all persons are equal before the law, to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, to guarantee equal legal protection.

Mr. President,

We would like to underline, recalling art. 6 and 7 of the Convention, that disable persons belonging to more vulnerable groups are entitled to a specific form of protection and promotion of their rights.

Women with disabilities are recognized to be ~~multiply~~ disadvantaged, experiencing exclusion on account of their gender and their disability. Women and girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

The situation of disable children deserves, as well, a special and dedicated attention According to UNICEF, 30% of street youths are disabled. Mortality for children with disabilities may be as high as 80 per cent in countries where under-five mortality as a whole has decreased below 20 per cent. For every child killed in warfare, three are injured and permanently disabled.

Mr. President,

Italy is confident that ~~this~~ Convention will significantly help to change the perception of disability and ensure that societies recognize that all people must be provided with the opportunities to live their life to their fullest potential, whatever that may be.

On this occasion, Italy would like to reiterate the need for a prompt and effective ratification and implementation of this legal instrument, which marks a major change in thinking about disability.

In conclusion, Mr. President, allow me to spend a final word to acknowledge the important role played throughout this process by the community of the disabled themselves and of the civil society as a whole, including many NGOs from different countries, which gave a crucial contribution to achieve this result.

Thank you.