



UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

**STATEMENT BY MS. MWENDWA MALECELA,
DELEGATION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF
TANZANIA AT THE SPECIAL EVENT ON THE
CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**

**DURING THE 4TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS
COUNCIL, GENEVA, 26TH MARCH, 2007**

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Mr President,

It gives me great honour to speak at this Special Event on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which will be open for signature in New York on 30th March 2007. My delegation commends the UN General Assembly for adopting the draft Convention which was the result of the good work of the *Ad Hoc Committee*. Without a doubt the Convention fits the description of the International Human Rights Instrument of the 21st Century. My delegation is confident that the Convention will receive an unprecedented number of signatures from UN Member States.

Mr President,

Disability in all its forms exists in all parts of world. According to UNDP, 80 per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries. Statistics from the World Bank reveal that 20 per cent of the world poorest people are disabled and tend to be stigmatized in their communities. According to UNESCO 90 per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school, thus will remain illiterate and wholly dependent throughout their life.

I need not to mention the natural causes of disabilities for these are widely registered. The human inflicted factors however can and must be addressed, for they are the major cause of disabilities in many parts of the world particularly in places that face civil strife, famine, authoritarian regimes and poverty. Thousands of civilians fall subject to the safeguards of the Convention at hand due to acts of war, terrorism, insurgency, ethnic conflicts, illicit trade of human beings and armed criminality. Others fall subject due to outdated and discriminatory customary practices, inhumane forms of punishment and sexual based violence.

It is due to this inescapable fact that we must unite to address not only the persisting inequalities and lack of opportunities experienced by people with disabilities in the world but also factors that cause and accelerate their plight.

Mr. President,

Poverty is both the cause and effect of disability in developing countries. It is a barrier to the realisation of social, economic and cultural rights contained in the Convention. Nevertheless, it is a barrier that can be surmounted through State Parties' own efforts and genuine international co-operation.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the only remaining challenge before us is the implementation of the Convention. I plead to the UN Member States to continue promoting and protecting, within their territories and beyond, all human rights in concord with the principles of universality, indivisibility, interdependency and interrelatedness of human rights. The rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities must be accorded comparable prominence as the human rights of specific groups such as women, children, migrant workers, internally displaced persons and minority persons. My Government remains fully committed to promoting and protecting human rights and in particular the rights and freedoms of the vulnerable and marginalised persons. It thus contentedly welcomes the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

I thank you Mr. President.