**ORAL STATEMENT DURING DAY OF GENERAL DISCUSSION (DGD) ON ARTICLE 11 OF THE CRPD ON WEDNESDAY 8TH MARCH 2023 AT 10AM TO 12 PM (GENEVA TIME) UNDER THE TOPIC: BEST PRACTICES TO PROTECT PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND ENSURE THEIR SAFETY IN SITUATIONS OF RISKS**

Honorable Committee members,

My name is Rose Resiato. I am a woman with disability from an indigenous community, the Maasai in Kenya. I am also a member of the Kenyan Network of Women and Girls with Disabilities. Kenya is currently facing a prolonged drought period among many other challenges that are resulting from climate changes. Climate change indeed remains one big challenge that is negatively impacting the lives of persons with disabilities both at community level and at individual levels. The country has faced food shortage resulting to a crisis that the government is trying to mitigate. This is even more difficult for indigenous women and girls with disabilities considering that there’s still a lot of stigma and discrimination directed at them with little interventions supporting the participation of women and girls with disabilities in communal affairs.

One critical practice that I would wish to highlight is on the need to strengthen organizations of women and girls with disabilities, more so within indigenous communities and support them to develop their own capacities so as to be active participants in humanitarian programs. Persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) have invaluable knowledge and expertise about how to make disaster risk management activities responsive to their needs. It is vital to include them in the design, implementation, and monitoring of these activities.

This is possible by creating a disability inclusion service unit within the local disaster/emergency offices and units. It’s important for organizations of persons with disabilities to have training about how they can take part and have a say.

Traditional African Communities are largely communal, so are indigenous communities. As such, there’s need to invest in community programs that de-stigmatize not only disability, but also gender. Until women and girls in general can partake in communal affairs, including ensuring safety in situations of risks, it will be difficult for girls and women with disabilities in particular to be involved in processes around the same.

If communities do not value experiences of women and girls, and in particular women and girls with disabilities, they will be isolated at community level and wouldn’t receive support during situations of risk.

As such, practices around removal of barriers to participation by women and girls with disabilities, more so from the indigenous communities, must be considered even as we broadly speak about situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

Thank you!