Statement by Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes
Chairperson, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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1. Opening remarks

Dear excellencies, it is a great honour for me to be with you today at this meeting of the Third Committee of the General Assembly. In order to make the most useful use of time allocated to me, I will proceed to brief you about the most recent developments in the work of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

2 Progress made by the Committee in carrying out its functions under the Convention and the Optional Protocol

a. The Committee, which has so far adopted 10 Concluding Observations and 13 lists of issues, since April 2011, when it began with the consideration of initial reports, has been steadily consolidating its interpretation of the Convention, particularly regarding complex issues such as the right of persons with disabilities to enjoy and exercise their legal capacity; the right to live autonomously in the community; sexual and reproductive rights of women with disabilities, accessibility, the right of children with disabilities to inclusive education, the right to full participation in public life, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment and the right of people with disabilities to have full access to the open labour markets,

b. The Committee has continued its work in the consideration of individual communications; it has adopted views on communications related to the right to health of persons with disabilities, on the accessibility to bank transactions and on the right to equal recognition before the law and the right to legal capacity. Additionally, the Committee has started to develop its inquiry procedure.

c. The Committee is moving ahead in the finalization of its general comments on legal capacity and accessibility. In September 2013, the Committee adopted two draft general comments, one on legal capacity and one on accessibility. The draft general comments have been posted on the Committee's webpage and interested stakeholders can provide comments until 31 January 2014. The Committee has started its work on the adoption of a General Comment on the rights of women with disabilities

d. The Committee has formally adopted follow-up procedures regarding its concluding observations and its views on communications

These developments are reflected in the second biennial report of the Committee A/68/55 submitted to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

3. The Committee and the strengthening of the treaty bodies system

The Committee has continued making efforts towards the harmonization of its methods of work with those of the other committees. The Committee adopted in September 2012 a statement in support of various recommendations of the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the strengthening of the treaty bodies system. The Committee also adopted
the Addis Ababa Guidelines on the impartiality and independence of experts of the treaty bodies and made the decision to incorporate these guidelines in its Rules of Procedures. The Committee met with the facilitators of the intergovernmental process on strengthening of the treaty bodies systems, in April 2013, stressing the need of making further progress in the attainment of full accessibility of the Committee's meetings for persons with disabilities, and the need to provide reasonable accommodation to experts and persons with disabilities in their interaction with the United Nations. The Committee is pleased to see that in the draft elements for a resolution, the co-facilitators have echoed the Committee's views on accessibility and reasonable accommodation.

4 The post-2015 agenda on disability and development

The Committee has adopted a statement on this topic, which is available on the Committee's website. In this statement the Committee encourages States to mainstream the human based approach in their plans, programs and projects related to the post-2015 agenda on development and disability, to take into account the full participation of persons with disabilities in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all public policies, and the need to framing all these initiatives taking into account the implementation of their legal obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In my intervention to the high level meeting on disability and development, held on 23 September 2013, I pointed that the mainstreaming of Human Rights based approach to disability is a must in the post-2015 development agenda; and that the respect of UNCRPD legal framework is crucial in this regard; sustainable development policies and programmes require to be inclusive and accessible for persons with disabilities; accountability of States parties should be a guiding principle; further efforts to collect disaggregated data need to be taken; multi directional international cooperation should be encouraged; and that interdependence between civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights needs to be further ensured, including by the recognition in law and in practice of the right of persons with disabilities to hold and exercise their legal capacity for the enjoyment of all their human rights. Some of these topics were reflected in the outcome document.

5. Additional time for the Committee

The Committee welcomes resolutions 66/229 and 67/160 of the General Assembly authorizing additional meeting time for the Committee, it is also grateful to the States Parties that sponsored these resolutions. The additional meeting time will allow the Committee to consider more initial reports beginning in 2014. In the biennium 2012-2013, during which the Committee met 3 weeks per year, the Committee was able to examine 4 States parties' reports, to adopt 4 lists of issues, to initiate its communications procedure. The Committee engaged constructively with States parties, UN agencies, National Human Rights Institutions, non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities. Beginning in 2014 the Committee will meet during 7 weeks per year, 5 weeks of plenary meetings and 2 weeks of pre-sessional working groups meetings. The Committee has forecasted to adopt 10 Concluding Observations and at least 10 lists of issues, which represents an increment of almost 150% in its productivity in comparison with that of the current biennium. The
Committee also encourages the General Assembly to continue taking steps to enable the full functioning of the Committee, by providing adequate staffing to the Committee and by ensuring that accessibility requirements such as closed captioning, sign language interpretation, and braille transcription are duly provided to the Committee.

6. Accessibility

The Committee welcomes the progress that has been made on the accessibility of its meetings. In this sense, the Committee appreciates the accessibility evaluation which was carried out in 2012 by a consortium of private entities under an agreement or memorandum of understanding with the United Nations. Much remain to be done in ensuring accessibility to documentation, websites, and physical accessibility to the UN conference facilities in Geneva.

7. Relationship between the Committee and the Conference

Bearing in mind that the Committee and the Conference are the two bodies established by the Convention; the Committee is committed to increase its cooperation and visibility with the Conference of States parties. In this regard this Chair had the opportunity to interact with the members of the Bureau of the Conference, during the last 6th COSP and she explored with them further way for further building up the partnership of the two bodies-

8. Final remarks

Let me, excellencies, to finalise by reiterating the Committee's assurances to Member States that the Committee will continue making efforts to increase its productivity in considering more states reports and other mandated activities under the Convention, as well as providing guidance and advice to States parties to the UNCRPD on better ways of implementing the Convention.