



It is my pleasure to address you as the First-Vice-Chair of the International Disability Alliance, one of the organizing partners. We are an Alliance of 14 global and regional organizations of persons with disabilities and their families, representing over one thousand such organizations. We speak for ourselves, no one should speak on our behalf.

And we advocate at the United Nations for a more inclusive and accessible global environment for everyone.

We have the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by 182 States. This makes our rights explicit.

I shall focus my remarks today on our right to participation: this is an absolutely critical right for persons with disabilities. It entails the meaningful consultation with and involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the development and implementation of policies and programmes.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the treaty body for our Convention, has a General Comment on the participation of persons with disabilities. Organizations of persons with disabilities, together with International Disability and Development Consortium, participated in the negotiations for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Committee explains that States parties to the Convention should consider consultations with and the involvement of persons with disabilities as mandatory. Consultations should include organizations representing the wide diversity of persons with disabilities, at the local, national, regional and international levels.

This “nothing about us without us” principle is fundamental to the workings of this forum. The 2030 Agenda and the United Nations General Assembly established modalities for the participation of Major Groups and other Stakeholders. Together, we are crucial to the successful implementation, follow-up, and review of the 2030 Agenda.

Article 32 of the convention, which addresses international cooperation, recognizes the importance of partnership between states parties and civil society, in particular organizations of

Remarks of the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities at the Official Virtual Session of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders at the UN High-Level Political Forum, Friday, 9 July, 3pm-5pm

persons with disabilities. It calls for States to ensure that international cooperation, including international development programmes, are inclusive of and accessible to persons with Disabilities.

We will continue to work with the Major Groups and other Stakeholders for the inclusion of civil society and stakeholders in all aspects of this work. We have the right to participate according to the organizing resolutions, and the right as a part of our human rights.

Human rights are indivisible and interrelated, as are the Sustainable Development Goals. Participation is a necessary element for the success of both. In order for no one to be left behind, we must be meaningfully involved in all stages of the decisions that affect us.

-Ruth Warick, International Disability Alliance, July 9, 2021

Final word:

The principle of “nothing about us without us” touches every aspect of our lives. With the Covid-19 pandemic, some states have actively pursued policies which excluded us, resulting in wide-scale violations of the rights to life and health of persons with disabilities, as well as impacting many other rights. Our participation is meant to ensure we can prevent such abuses. One of the most important rights we have – a key to all other rights- is the right to participate in decisions that affect us.