



**Convention on the Rights
of Persons with Disabilities**

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**Consideration of reports submitted by States
parties under article 35 of the Convention**

Initial reports of States parties due in 2011

Sudan**

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Background information

1. The Republic of the Sudan ratified the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol on 25 April 2009. All basic rights and freedoms are enshrined in the “Bill of Rights” which constitutes Part Two of the Sudanese Interim National Constitution of 2005, while other constitutional provisions afford protection to human rights as a whole. Successive national laws have also addressed human rights in general and the rights of persons with disabilities in particular. They include the Children’s Act of 2010, the Criminal Code of 1991 and the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009.

2. The present report describes the status of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Sudan and the extent to which persons with disabilities are able to enjoy the rights guaranteed therein and under the Constitution and the international treaties which the Sudan has ratified.

3. The Government of the Sudan reaffirms its readiness to cooperate with United Nations human rights bodies, including the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which, guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, transparency and non-politicization, and is seeking to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The Government of the Sudan is also committed to promote and guarantee the enjoyment of human rights in general.

4. The present report contains an account of efforts made by the legislature, the judiciary and the executive to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The challenges and difficulties have not affected the State’s desire to ensure that such persons are able to enjoy their rights to the full. To that end, it cooperates with international, regional and national organizations, passes laws and takes all measures necessary to ensure that this category of persons can exercise all the rights guaranteed to them under the Sudanese Interim National Constitution of 2005 and international and regional treaties ratified by the Sudan.

National context

5. The Sudan is one of the biggest countries in Africa. Following the separation of South Sudan, the surface area of the Republic of the Sudan is 1,881,000 km². The country shares borders with seven other States: Egypt and Libya to the north, South Sudan to the south, Chad and the Central African Republic to the west, and Ethiopia and Eritrea to the East. The Red Sea separates the Sudan from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

6. Estimates of the population for the period 2006-2010 and of population distribution by province for 2009 and for 2010 are detailed in the tables and charts contained in annexes 1 to 4. As for demographics, five population censuses have been held to date in 1956, in 1973, 1983 and 1993 and most recently in 2008. According to the 2008 census, the country has a population of 39.2 million, 51.3 per cent male and 48.7 per cent female, which represents an increase of 5.3 per cent as compared with the census of 1993.¹

7. Also according to the 2008 census, persons under the age of 15 account for 42.6 per cent of the population, which implies that Sudanese society is youthful, while the over-60s represent 5.2 per cent of the population. Since neither of these two groups is productive, dependency rates are high and this is something that the State has to take into account.

¹ Source: Ministry of Welfare and Social Security — National Population Council (Sudan population characteristics and dynamics), 2010 report.

Number of persons with disabilities in the Sudan

8. According to the United Nations, 15 per cent of the world's population has a disability. That proportion is higher in developing countries due to diseases, accidents, wars and the lack of primary health care. In the Sudan, statistics relating to persons with disabilities were collected as part of the 1993 population census when the proportion of such persons was estimated at 1.5 per cent in the northern provinces alone, in other words around 323,595 people. According to that census, disability was more prevalent in rural than in urban areas by a factor of 1.3 per cent, with males accounting for 53 per cent of persons with disabilities and females for 47 per cent. According to the 2008 census, the number of disabled persons was 1,854,985, or 4.8 per cent of the total population.

Important statistics

9. Table 1 below shows the higher prevalence of disability among males than among females.

Table 1

| <i>Gender</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 968 086 | 52.2 |
| Female | 886 899 | 47.7 |
| Total | 1 854 985 | 100 |

10. Table 2 below specifies the proportion of persons with disabilities in urban and rural areas and among nomads. It clearly shows that the proportion of such persons is higher in rural areas than in towns and cities, which can be attributed to lower levels of health awareness among rural populations.

Table 2

| <i>Area</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Urban | 488 695 | 26.3 |
| Rural | 1 236 550 | 66.7 |
| Nomadic | 129 740 | 7.0 |
| Total | 1 854 985 | 100 |

11. Table 3 below shows the number of persons with disabilities in the provinces of the Sudan.

Table 3

| <i>Province</i> | <i>Numbers</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Northern | 46 880 | 2.5 |
| Nile | 54 327 | 2.9 |
| Red Sea | 50 998 | 2.7 |
| Kassala | 80 479 | 4.3 |
| Gedaref | 65 771 | 3.5 |

| <i>Province</i> | <i>Numbers</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Khartoum | 65 771 | 3.5 |
| El Gezira | 159 258 | 8.5 |
| White Nile | 80 795 | 4.3 |
| Sennar | 63 293 | 3.4 |
| Blue Nile | 37 156 | 2.0 |
| Northern Kordofan | 169 462 | 9.1 |
| Southern Kordofan | 81 522 | 4.4 |
| Northern Darfur | 104 254 | 5.6 |
| Western Darfur | 80 767 | 4.4 |
| Southern Darfur | 176 844 | 9.5 |

Report preparation methodology

12. The Government of the Sudan has devoted great care to the current report, which was drafted following wide-ranging consultations at a national level with all stakeholders, including ministries concerned with the rights of persons with disabilities, civil society organizations, NGOs and organizations of persons with disabilities. The report focuses on fundamental rights and follows the order of the articles in the Convention.

Legal framework

13. Persons with disabilities enjoy full protection under Sudanese law, starting with the Constitution. Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Bill of Rights — which is an integral part of the Constitution — contains provisions which protect and promote all human rights, including the rights of persons with disabilities. A number of other Sudanese legislative enactments also contain provisions covering the rights of persons with disabilities. A full list of the relevant enactments is given below:

- The Sudanese Interim National Constitution, 2005;
- The Persons with Disabilities Act, 2009;
- The Act establishing the National Association for Orthotics/Prosthetics, 2002;
- The Youth and Sport Associations Regulatory Act, 2002;
- The Voluntary Work Act, 2006;
- The Civil Service Act, 2007;
- The Criminal Code, 1991;
- The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1991;
- The Children's Act, 2010;
- The Civil Transactions Act, 1984;
- The Traffic Act, 2010;
- The Medical Commission Act, 2008.

14. As part of the process to implement the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009, a number of regulations were approved by the National Council for Disabilities. They include the following:

1. Regulations governing the activity of organizations of persons with disabilities, 2011;
2. Regulations governing exemptions and facilities, 2011;
3. Regulations governing the meetings of the National Council for Disabilities, 2011;
4. Regulations governing the Fund for Disabled Persons, 2011;
5. Regulations governing the movement of blind persons.

Mechanisms

15. These laws help to ensure that all the international obligations to which the Sudan has subscribed are duly implemented. As part of the country's efforts to fulfil its commitments under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the National Council for Disabilities was restructured in October 2010. It is the principal authority for planning and monitoring disability policies and programmes at the national level and for coordinating the efforts of the State and civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities. The Secretary-General of the National Council was appointed in June 2011 and persons with disabilities make up half the membership. The Council undertakes its activities through its secretariat and the specialized committees which coordinate and follow up with other stakeholders.

16. The State is seeking to preserve the rights of persons with disabilities of all categories: persons with motor disabilities, persons who are blind, deaf or mute and persons with mental disabilities. A number of mechanisms, including those listed below, have been put in place to monitor and follow up on the rights of persons with disabilities:

- (a) The National Council for Disabilities, which was established under the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009;
- (b) A subcommittee on persons with disabilities in the National Assembly, which is the lower house of the national Parliament. The subcommittee is part of the Health and Housing Committee and is presided over by a person with a disability who sits in the National Assembly;
- (c) A persons with disabilities section in the Advisory Council for Human Rights, the president and members of the section being themselves persons with disabilities;
- (d) The Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education;
- (e) Seventeen provincial councils for persons with disabilities.

Rights enshrined in the Convention

Article 1: Purpose

17. The definition of persons with disabilities in Sudanese legislation is consistent with the definition in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009 applies to all persons who have long-term physical, mental or

sensory impairments which may prevent or hinder them from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal footing with others.

Article 2: Definitions

18. Under the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009, “communication” refers to any media that may assist persons with disabilities to carry out their functions, tasks or duties. The Ministry of Education has approved the inclusion of sign language as one of the languages taught in primary education, as well as in specialized institutions as in the case of the Al-Nour Institute.

19. The definition of “language” is covered in article 4 (c) of the 2009 Act which contains provisions to make education accessible through Braille, sign language and other forms of non-spoken language. Sign language and other languages are also used in official State media.

20. Steps are being taken to help persons with disabilities to access technology and utilize the Internet by facilitating the import of advanced electronic equipment. However, due to its exorbitant cost, equipment still remains unavailable.

21. The Sudan is striving to ensure equality, and particularly social and cultural equality, and is working to raise awareness, remove the social stigma associated with disability and provide education, health care and other services which can help to achieve that goal.

22. The State is taking care to respect the capacities of children with disabilities and has enacted policies to help such children to access appropriate tuition through special education or integration into the general education system.

Article 3: General principles

23. By ratifying the Convention, the Sudan committed itself to the basic principles of respect for the inherent dignity of persons, their individual autonomy and their freedom to make their own choices. This is set forth in the Sudanese Interim National Constitution of 2005, article 45 of which stipulates that: “The State shall guarantee to persons with special needs the enjoyment of all the rights and freedoms set out in this Constitution; especially respect for their human dignity, access to suitable education and employment, and full participation in society”. Part II of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009 also defines certain privileges, exemptions and facilities enjoyed by persons with disabilities, while neither national laws nor everyday practice discriminate against such persons in regard to judicial procedure or participation in parliamentary, economic or cultural life.

24. There are no obstacles to prevent persons with disabilities from participating in society or exercising their right to share in social, economic and cultural life. The State institutions endeavour to ensure that they can be appropriately involved in all areas of activity; for example, the Paralympic Committee has helped persons with disabilities to participate in local, regional and international competitions.

25. The media play a vital role in ensuring respect for difference through seminars, lectures and television and radio programmes which raise awareness about disability issues and disseminate an understanding of disability as part of natural human diversity. There are special programmes for persons with disabilities on national radio FM 106, the programme *Manarat* on SportsFM as well as the programme *Rasid al-Hasanat* in which the public can communicate directly with persons with disabilities. On national television, sign language is used on one daily programme and one weekly programme.

26. The Sudan believes implicitly in equality of opportunity as a fundamental right of persons with disabilities. However, a number of societal obstacles hinder the full enjoyment of that right. As indicated above, efforts are ongoing to educate, raise awareness and remove those obstacles in order to achieve full equality of opportunity as guaranteed by law.

27. The Sudan is striving to ensure equality, and particularly social and cultural equality, and enacts laws, works to raise awareness and remove the social stigma associated with disability, and seeks to provide education, health care and other necessary services which can help to achieve that goal.

28. Under national legislation, most prosthetic aids — supplied by the International Red Cross — are provided free of charge or for nominal sums not exceeding the cost price of the materials. This provision accurately reflects the sense of the definition of “reasonable accommodation” under the Convention.

29. In order to address and modify certain discriminatory practices and customs, workshops and seminars have been held, and the media have been mobilized, to educate the public in the rights of persons with disabilities and highlight their creative abilities, which has had a positive effect on early upbringing and the acceptance of others.

30. The State celebrates the annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities during which it seeks to highlight some of the challenges facing such persons and to showcase their artistic and sporting abilities.

31. Regulations governing the movement of blind persons in public places have been amended to include the five white-stick signals, knowledge of which is now one of the conditions for obtaining a driving licence.

Article 4: General obligations

32. Legislative measures taken by the Government of the Sudan:

(a) Article 27 of the Sudanese Interim National Constitution of 2005, under which the Convention is legally binding upon the State in all areas;

(b) Disability-specific legislation:

(i) The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009:

This Act covers the rights of persons with disabilities in all social, legal, cultural and sporting aspects of their lives and its provisions are binding upon the State. It abrogated the Disability Act of 1984 which was not legally binding.

(ii) The Act establishing the National Association for Orthotics/Prosthetics of 2002:

This Act provided for the establishment of the National Association for Orthotics/Prosthetics which has corporate personality and operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security. It supplies prosthetics and orthotics as well as hearing aids for deaf persons and mobility aids, such as white sticks, for blind persons.

(c) Laws relating to disability rights. Various laws touch on issues associated with the rights of persons with disabilities:

(i) The Youth and Sport Associations Regulatory Act of 2003. Under paragraph 5 of the section entitled “Definitions” and article 13, paragraph 1, persons with disabilities have the right to form sporting associations.

- (ii) The Voluntary Work Act of 2006. Article 17, paragraph 2, of the Act makes mention of the right of persons with disabilities to form their own organizations;
- (iii) The Civil Service Act of 2007. According to article 24, paragraph 7 of the Act, a minimum of 2 per cent of posts must be allocated to persons with disabilities;
- (iv) The Code of Criminal Procedure of 1991. Article 137, paragraph 2, of the Code states as follows: “If the court finds that an accused person is unable to understand the proceedings because of some sensory deficiency or for any other reason, it may appoint someone to explain those proceedings or to relay them in a manner comprehensible to the accused person.”;
- (v) The Children’s Act of 2010 dedicates the whole of its tenth chapter to the rights of children with disabilities. It includes the following provisions:
- Article 48, paragraph 1, which contains provision to protect children with disabilities and their right to social, health and psychological care as a way of helping them to become self-reliant;
 - Article 48, paragraph 2, which stipulates the right to habilitation through the provision of social, psychological, medical, educational and vocational training services and assistive devices;
 - Article 49, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, which contain provision for the education of children with disabilities;
 - Article 50, which acknowledges the right of children with disabilities to obtain a vocational certificate;
 - Article 52, which acknowledges the right of children with disabilities to work, depending on their qualifications;
 - Article 53, which stipulates that compensatory and assistive aids and mobility devices needed by poor children with disabilities are exempt from customs duty;
- (vi) The Civil Transactions Act of 1984. Under article 61, paragraphs 1 and 2, in cases of dual disability — such as deafness/muteness/blindness — or of severe physical incapacity, the court may appoint a custodian to help to manage the financial affairs of the person concerned under the supervision of the court;
- (vii) The Traffic Act of 2010. Article 25, paragraphs (a), (b) and (c), set forth the conditions for the issuance of driving licences to persons with disabilities;
- (viii) The Medical Commission Act of 2008. The President of the Commission forms committees of experts to undertake the following tasks:
- Establishment of rules to gauge physical fitness for government service on initial appointment or renewal of contract or to evaluate or re-evaluate a person on the basis of age or degree or type of incapacity;
 - Gauging physical fitness for:
 - Appointments to posts within the national civil service;
 - Continuation of national civil service in the event of sickness or incapacity;
 - Determination of the type and level of incapacity of members of the national civil service if they suffer injury or occupational diseases during the course of their duties, on the basis of a request made by the employer, the courts, the person concerned or his or her lawyer;

- Determination of the level and type of incapacity in order to establish criminal responsibility.

Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination

33. According to article 31 of the Sudanese Interim National Constitution of 2005, all persons are equal before the law and enjoy equal protection under the law without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religious creed, political opinion or ethnic origin. Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Constitution states that all treaties ratified by the Sudan form an integral part of national law and, therefore, articles 2 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 10 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are all part of the national legislation of the Sudan.

Article 6: Women with disabilities

34. The Sudan recognizes that women play an important role in national development and social cohesion. Sudanese legislation contains general provisions covering women's rights, in accordance with article 15, paragraph 2, and article 32, paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4, of the Sudanese Interim National Constitution of 2005 which protect and promote those rights. Women with disabilities are not excluded from those provisions and enjoy equal rights to protection, welfare and effective participation through training and educational opportunities. In fact, women with disabilities have enjoyed excellent opportunities to participate and are even represented in the Sudanese Parliament.

35. In labour legislation, the same rules apply to women with and without disabilities. They have the same time allocated for breast-feeding, the same access to crèche facilities and the same medical leaves of absence, etc.

Article 7: Children with disabilities

36. The Constitution affords protection to children, including children with disabilities. According to article 32, paragraph 5, the State shall protect the rights of the child pursuant to the international and regional treaties ratified by the Sudan. Under the Children's Act of 2010, children with disabilities have the right to social, health and psychological care and the State has an obligation to protect such children from anything that may be harmful to their health or development and to provide social, psychological and vocational services, and compensatory aids free of charge. Article 17, paragraph 1, of the Children's Act contains special provision for children with disabilities, and particularly children with mental or psychological ailments. Under its provisions, street children who, following examination, are found to be suffering from neglect, have no family of their own and are afflicted by a mental or psychological condition must be placed in a specialized State hospital.

37. Children's cultural centres have been set up in order to develop the capacities of children, with a particular focus on children with disabilities.

38. There are programmes in place to promote the use of sign language and a section to develop the skills and creativity of children with disabilities has been set up within the National Centre for Child Culture.

39. Article 48, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Children's Act covers the right of children with disabilities to social, health and psychological care. Under that article, it is incumbent upon the State to protect such children from anything that may hinder their education or harm their physical, mental, spiritual or social health and development. The State must also safeguard their right to habilitation through the provision of social, psychological, medical, educational and vocational services and compensatory aids which must be provided free of charge. Article 53 of the same Act stipulates that compensatory and assistive aids and mobility devices required by poor children with disabilities are — with the approval of the Minister of Finance and National Economy on the basis of a ministerial recommendation — exempt from customs duty.

40. Under the Children's Act of 2010, special judicial institutions have been created, including family and child protection units and special prosecutors and courts for children. A hotline has also been set up for the reporting of cases of violence against children.

41. Under articles 60 and 62 of the Children's Act of 2010, judges and prosecutors must follow training courses on sociology, psychology and international laws concerning children.

42. In cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other agencies, during the course of 2011 the National Council for Child Protection organized training on the Children's Act of 2010 for police officers, lawyers, sociologists and prosecutors.

43. As part of the State's efforts to develop the capacities of children, children's parliaments have been created to enable them to exercise their right to participate and express their opinions freely. Children with disabilities of all categories are also represented in those parliaments.

Article 8: Awareness-raising

44. Efforts to raise awareness and educate the public about disability issues have included workshops and seminars highlighting the abilities and creativity of persons with disabilities, as well as festivals and other national celebrations to endorse the rights set forth in the Convention and in national legislation.

45. Awareness-raising campaigns have been organized through the media as part of the efforts to change negative and stereotypical perceptions, and discriminatory and harmful practices against persons with disabilities. Various audiovisual and print media have helped to raise awareness and this has had the effect of encouraging positive behaviour in families with respect to early upbringing and promoting the acceptance of others.

46. After the Sudan had signed the Convention, but before it was ratified, civil society organizations and federations of persons with disabilities launched campaigns aimed at government officials, other groups of persons with disabilities in society and the general public to inform them about the rights contained in the Convention. Those efforts included seminars, lectures and forums both in the capital and in the provinces where the focus was on the legislative and executive authorities.

Article 9: Accessibility

47. The principle of ensuring that the physical environment, services and information remain accessible to persons with disabilities is consecrated in article 4, paragraph 2 (p), (q), (u) and (w), of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009. According to those provisions, measures have to be taken to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access

buildings, streets, transportation and other facilities; the architectural design of buildings must make reasonable accommodation to ensure ease of access and movement for persons with disabilities; special disabled parking places and indications in sign language have to be made available within public facilities, and compensatory and assistive devices for work, movement or education should be exempt from customs duty.

48. Although the right of accessibility for persons with disabilities is guaranteed by the law and regulations, its effective implementation requires concerted coordinated endeavours among stakeholders and greater public awareness. In most cases, the building code has been applied in the premises of institutions dealing with persons with disabilities, which have been designed with accessibility features such as ramps and lifts, etc.

Article 10: Right to life

49. The right to life of persons with disabilities is consecrated in article 28 of the Constitution of the Sudan which makes no distinction between persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons when it states that every human being has the inherent right to life, dignity and the integrity of his or her person.

50. Confirmation of that right can be found in articles 133 and 134 of the Criminal Code of 1991 which criminalize attempted suicide, and in article 135, paragraph 1, which criminalizes abortion.

51. The State provides primary health-care services in both urban and rural areas for mothers, children and other age groups. It also runs prevention programmes, raises awareness about nutritional requirements and cares for the sick. It delivers these services through a network of hospitals, clinics and other medical establishments located as close as possible to citizens. Those health services are also available, without discrimination, to persons with disabilities.

52. Through its health insurance programmes, the State is able to provide free medical services via a network of health establishments covering most of the country. It also supplies assistive devices and rehabilitation through seven prosthetic/orthotic centres. As part of the poverty reduction programme run by the Ministry of Finance and the Zakat Office, which is part of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security, most persons with disabilities are covered by the health insurance scheme.

Article 11: Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

53. In accordance with article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and out of humanitarian consideration for persons with disabilities in risk situations such as armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, priority is given to providing emergency assistance to members of that group when needed.

Article 12: Equal recognition of persons with disabilities before the law

54. Under the Bill of Rights, which is part of the Sudanese Constitution, all citizens — including persons with disabilities — have equal rights and duties. All people are equal before the law and enjoy equal protection under the law without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religious creed, political opinion or ethnic origin.

55. Rights and equality are also safeguarded under national law. In order to preserve the rights of persons with disabilities, the Civil Transactions Act allows the courts to assist

persons who are deaf and blind and physically incapable of fully exercising their rights by appointing a custodian to help them to do so.

56. If a person with a mental disability commits a criminal act, the law allows that person to be referred to a specialized institution where he or she can receive care and habilitation. The authorities can appoint the person's family or some other suitable party to provide proper care as long as they receive sufficient guarantees that the person's rights and dignity will be protected.

Article 13: Access to justice

57. In order to promote human rights and in particular the rights of persons with disabilities, article 35 of the Sudanese Interim National Constitution of 2005 states that access to justice is a universal and inalienable right. The Sudan has taken steps to ensure that statements and court proceedings are translated by court-appointed translators or assistants and is paying the costs associated with protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

58. Children have the right to take action by themselves via the 9696 hotline which they can contact to report abuse and harassment. Article 82 of the Children's Act of 2010 defines the role of the social worker in cases where children are placed under social supervision, a role which includes the duty to protect the rights and privacy of the child.

59. Under the Criminal Code, if an accused person is proven not to be in full possession of his or her mental faculties due to a mental or psychological illness, the courts may order that he or she be admitted to a hospital equipped to treat such conditions. The courts can also entrust the care of such a person to his or her guardian or to some other trustworthy party who undertakes to provide proper care. One model institution in this respect is the Dr. Abdelaal Idrisi psychiatric clinic.

Article 14: Liberty and security of persons with disabilities

60. The State has enacted legislation to ensure that persons with disabilities of any kind are able to enjoy their right to personal liberty and security and that no one is deprived of their liberty by reason of disability. Under article 29 of the Sudanese Interim Constitution of 2005, everyone has the right to personal liberty and security and no one shall be subjected to arrest, detention or deprivation of liberty except as prescribed by law.

61. Under article 16 of the Regulation of Prisons and Treatment of Inmates Act of 2010, judicial officials and prison officers receive training on how to deal with persons who have mental, psychological or physical disabilities. Inmates with mental illnesses or abnormalities are placed under observation and given hospital treatment until they are cured and regulations are in place to define how inmates with physical disabilities should be handled.

Article 15: Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

62. The authorities have taken steps to offer effective protection from torture for persons with disabilities pursuant to article 33 of the Sudanese Interim Constitution of 2005 which states that "no person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment". Under article 30, paragraph 2, of the Constitution, "no person shall be required

to perform forced or compulsory labour except as a penalty upon conviction by a competent court of law”.

63. The law forbids the security forces from practising torture of any kind against citizens under any circumstances whatsoever and sets forth the disciplinary procedures to be taken against anyone who infringes that prohibition.

Article 16: Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

64. By ratifying relevant regional and international treaties, and through its own national legislation, the Sudan has taken legal, administrative, social, educational and other measures to protect persons with disabilities from all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse. This is reconfirmed in article 45, paragraph 1, of the Sudanese Interim Constitution of 2005 whereby the State undertakes to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy all rights and freedoms, especially respect for their human dignity, full participation in society and access to suitable work and education. The Government has also taken special measures to care for children with disabilities who, under article 48, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Children’s Act of 2010, have the right to social, health and psychological care provided by the State.

65. The National Council for Disabilities was established in October 2010 as a way of ensuring that the State could monitor the effective implementation of its own services and programmes and of national and international laws concerning the protection of persons with disabilities, and a higher monitoring and follow-up committee was formed pursuant to administrative decision No. 31 of 2010. Furthermore, the following subcommittees were brought into being by administrative decision No. 54 of 2010: the institutional subcommittee which monitors institutions and other administrative offices handling disability issues; the civil and political rights subcommittee which monitors the extent to which the rights of persons with disabilities are respected and makes recommendations and proposals for the implementation of the Convention; and the economic, social and cultural rights subcommittee which was responsible for preparing the draft of the first report of the Sudan under the Convention with the help of the competent officials.

Article 17: Protecting the integrity of the person

66. The State takes care to protect the integrity of all Sudanese citizens pursuant to article 28 of the Sudanese Interim Constitution of 2005, according to which every human being has the inherent right to life, dignity and the integrity of his or her person.

Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality

67. The Sudan recognizes the human right to liberty of movement. Under article 42 of the Sudanese Interim Constitution of 2005, every citizen has the right to freedom of movement and the liberty to choose his or her place of residence, as well as the right to leave and return to the country, in accordance with the law.

68. The right to citizenship and nationality is enshrined in the Constitution of the Sudan and other national legislation. According to article 7 of the Constitution: “Citizenship shall be the basis for equal rights and duties for all Sudanese. Every person born to a Sudanese mother or father shall have an inalienable right to enjoy Sudanese nationality and citizenship. ... No naturalized Sudanese shall be deprived of his or her acquired citizenship except in accordance with the law. A Sudanese national may acquire the nationality of another country in the manner prescribed by law.”

69. The aforementioned provisions confirm the right of persons with disabilities to travel both inside and outside the country.

70. The State has implemented legislation in the form of the Children's Act and the Civil Registration Act to record each new childbirth. Those laws and the regulations governing the Central Bureau of Statistics are applied to ensure that all newborns are duly registered, without discrimination against children with disabilities.

Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community

71. According to article 4 (r) in Part II of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009, all Sudanese citizens, including persons with disabilities, have the right to obtain residential land in accordance with the law, where they can reside among their family and their community. Persons with disabilities are not arbitrarily separated and made to live in special communities.

72. The Persons with Disabilities Act — article 4 (c), (m), (i), (n), (q), (s), (g) and (u) — also contains provisions for shared and sheltered housing which take account of types of disability and include arrangements for reasonable accommodation and accessibility.

Article 20: Personal mobility

73. In accordance with article 20 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, facilitating the daily life of such persons is one of the main aspects of efforts to ensure their social, economic and cultural inclusion. The State has also taken various steps to facilitate personal mobility for persons with disabilities, including the use of signal indicators and street signs for accessibility pursuant to regulations issued in 2003 governing the movement of blind persons in public places. Motorists receive training in those indicators and signs as one of the conditions for obtaining a driving licence, and intensive training in the five white-stick signals is also offered to senior police officers in three provinces.

74. Measures have been taken to ensure the availability of high-quality, reasonably priced technology and the National Association for Orthotics/Prosthetics was created in order to give persons with disabilities the opportunity to obtain prosthetic limbs free of charge. A mobile prosthetic limb service has also been set up in order to serve persons with disabilities at or near their places of residence.

Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion

75. The right to freedom of expression and opinion is guaranteed under article 30 of the Sudanese Interim National Constitution of 2005, which reads as follows:

1. Every citizen shall have an unrestricted right to the freedom of expression, reception and dissemination of information, publication and access to the press without prejudice to order, safety or public morals, as determined by law;
2. The State shall guarantee the freedom of the press and other media as shall be regulated by law in a democratic society;
3. All media shall abide by professional ethics, shall refrain inciting religious, ethnic, racial or cultural hatred and shall not agitate for violence or war.

76. Article 4 (c) of the Persons with Disabilities Act concerns access to information through the mass media and special broadcasts focusing on the various activities of persons

with disabilities. In accordance with the provisions contained in that article, such persons are able to access the media and exercise their right to freedom of expression and opinion without discrimination.

77. The aforementioned provisions were put into practical effect with the creation of SportsFM 194. Furthermore, sign language has also been given official status and is used on the programmes of State television.

Article 22: Respect for privacy

78. Article 37 of the Constitution reads as follows: “The privacy of all persons shall be inviolable; no person shall be subjected to interference in his or her private life, family, home or correspondence, save in accordance with the law.”

79. In order to protect the privacy of persons with disabilities, and to ensure that they are not kept concealed, the National Council for Disabilities organizes workshops and seminars to disseminate a culture of respect for the rights of persons with disabilities.

80. The National Council for Disabilities also cooperates with civil society groups and organizations of persons with disabilities to spread greater awareness throughout society.

Article 23: Respect for home and the family

81. The Sudan has taken a number of steps to ensure that people can exercise their right to marry and start a family. Article 15, paragraph 1, of the Sudanese Interim National Constitution reads: “The family is the natural and fundamental unit of society and is entitled to the protection of the law; the right of man and woman to marry and found a family shall be recognized according to their respective family laws and no marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the parties.” Article 15 (2) stipulates that: “The State shall protect motherhood and women from injustice, promote gender equality and the role of women in family, and empower them in public life.” In cooperation with civil society organizations, the State has introduced measures, such as alternative family programmes, to ensure that children are not separated from either or both of their parents due to disability.

82. The authorities also undertake other actions in support of parents and families of young persons with disabilities to ensure that such persons are not abandoned or kept in confinement. The aim is to educate people and to disseminate a culture conducive to the rights of persons with disabilities through regular support and awareness-raising campaigns in the provinces, launched in strategic partnership with relevant civil society groups and organizations of persons with disabilities.

83. With strategies such as the alternative family programme and with the help of civil society organizations, the State seeks to avoid having to place children with disabilities in institutions.

Article 24: Education

84. Article 44, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Constitution enshrines the universal right to education without discrimination:

1. Education is a right for every citizen and the State shall provide access to education without discrimination as to religion, race, ethnicity, gender or disability;
2. Primary education is compulsory and the State shall provide it free of charge.

85. This constitutional provision is supported by national legislation such as article 4 in Part II of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009 which covers rights, privileges and exemptions enjoyed by persons with disabilities:

- Paragraph (a) under which persons with disabilities are exempted from tuition fees for primary, general and university education;
- Paragraph (b) under which special educational programmes are available for persons with dual or severe disabilities, including interpreters to help them to understand lessons and exams correctly;
- Paragraph (c) which contains provisions to make education accessible through Braille, sign language and other forms of non-spoken languages as well as via technical aids;
- Paragraph (d) which states that talented and gifted persons with disabilities should be given incentives;
- Paragraph (w) which stipulates that compensatory and assistive devices to facilitate the work, movement or education of persons with disabilities are exempt from customs duty.

86. Under the Public Education Act of 2001, persons with disabilities have an unrestricted right to education. Provincial laws also reiterate their right to education, exemption from tuition fees and free travel within the province. A number of other measures, including the following, also guarantee their access to schools:

(a) Ministerial Decree No. 4 of 2004 provided for the establishment of special education boards in the provinces to help persons with disabilities;

(b) A director for special education has been assigned to each province to address the educational issues faced by students with disabilities;

(c) Since 2007, training programmes for teachers of persons with disabilities have been run by a department within the Ministry of Education. To date, around 520 teachers have undergone training in the Sudan and now represent an important resource for the education of persons with disabilities. In addition, some courses have been run abroad and a total of 82 teachers have received disability education training in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen and Sharjah.

(d) Another measure to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities was the ministerial decree issued in 2009 which assigned a financial premium as an incentive for persons working in special education. Wages were increased by 20 per cent for teachers and by 5 per cent for auxiliary teaching staff.

87. With the help of UNICEF, a survey was carried out in 2010 on numbers and types of disabilities among the population of the provinces of Northern Kordofan and Gedaref, the aim being to develop programmes for the various categories. The findings and the recommendations concerning needs were examined in a workshop on the basis of which the following plans were devised:

(a) Increased national and foreign support for the integration of persons with disabilities into education;

(b) An increase in the number of personnel trained in this type of work;

(c) Promotion of greater awareness among stakeholders (families, teachers, students with disabilities and others) as well as among decision makers;

(d) Modification of the current school curriculum to facilitate the integration of persons with disabilities. That process began in 2011 with the adaptation of the curriculum

to accommodate all categories of disability and is currently focusing on persons who are deaf.

88. The Sudan has also sought to ensure that all students with disabilities have access to educational services. In that regard it has taken the following measures:

- The Federal Ministry of Education instructed all the ministries of education in the provinces to establish departments of special education and workshops were subsequently held at which all the directors of those departments were able to discuss such issues as training and school curricula;
- Core units of special education teachers were formed at district level and in individual schools to apply and monitor mechanisms for the integration of students with disabilities;
- Decrees have been issued and implemented concerning special education and the treatment of students with special needs in regard to tuition fees, exams and educational aids;
- Special education has been introduced as a basic subject in teacher training colleges;
- Graduates from teacher training college undergo further training in institutes for persons with disabilities;
- Qualified persons with disabilities have been appointed to teaching posts;
- A policy of integrating persons with disabilities into education has been adopted, beginning with preschool education;
- As a form of encouragement, certain universities have exempted postgraduate students from payment of fees;
- As part of the measures to promote the linguistic identity of persons who are deaf, a sign language dictionary has been compiled.

Article 25: Health

89. Article 46 of the Sudanese Constitution of 2005 guarantees access to health care for persons with disabilities. It reads as follows: “The State shall promote public health, establish, rehabilitate and develop basic medical and diagnostic institutions, and provide free primary health care and emergency services for all citizens.” Under these provisions, persons with disabilities have equal rights of access to quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health services.

90. Part II of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009 also defines certain privileges, exemptions and facilities enjoyed by persons with disabilities:

- Paragraph (i) stipulates that persons with disabilities are to be covered by social insurance;
- Paragraph (j) states that reasonable accommodation in health care must be provided for persons with disabilities;
- Paragraph (k) makes provision for early screening of children with disabilities and of pregnant women, in order to reduce the incidence of disability.

91. Various measures have been implemented through the National Association for Orthotics/Prosthetics to train physicians and other health professionals on the rights of persons with disabilities. One of the central policies of the primary health-care system in

the Sudan is to offer preventive care to mothers and children to protect them against diseases which can cause disability.

92. A number of awareness-raising campaigns on the causes of disability, the importance of early screening and prevention have been launched through the media, and courses have been held at universities and other institutions of higher education.

93. A high-level diploma in orthotics/prosthetics has been introduced.

94. In coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO), periodic vaccination campaigns take place to protect children against diseases and other conditions which can cause disability, such as polio and vitamin A deficiency.

95. Another measure which helps to protect persons with disabilities is the health insurance programme.

Article 26: Habilitation and rehabilitation

96. The State recognizes the importance of psychological, social, educational and vocational habilitation for persons with disabilities as a way of enabling them to become self-reliant. In this regard, it practises positive discrimination as evinced by paragraph (f) in Part II of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009, which provides for “an annual training quota for persons with disabilities, in coordination with technical training institutes”. There is a national centre for the habilitation of blind persons while organizations of persons with disabilities and civil society organizations also run training and habilitation programmes.

97. A technical institute for prosthetic limbs has been established in order to ensure that qualified personnel are available to provide motor disability training, and a mobile prosthetic workshop has been established which travels around every province in the country.

98. Under article 49, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, and article 50 of the Children’s Act of 2010, children with disabilities are to be integrated into the various levels of the education system in a manner consistent with the nature of their disability. At the same time, vocational training institutions for persons with disabilities are promoted and developed and existing centres upgraded. The Act also provides for the establishment of special schools or classes to teach children with disabilities in a manner consistent with their capacities, in accordance with conditions and specifications laid down by the authorities concerned. Moreover, children with disabilities who have undergone habilitation are issued with a vocational certificate which — apart from any other information that the authorities may see fit to add — shows the trade which they are qualified to practise once they have reached the legal working age.

99. Persons who have undergone habilitation are registered and efforts are made to find employment for them. Pursuant to articles 51 and 52 of the Children’s Act, the labour office in the relevant jurisdiction keeps a special register in which it records the name of children with disabilities who have undergone habilitation and the institution by which it was provided. The Minister of Labour designates posts in the public sector for persons with disabilities, depending upon the required qualifications, and encourages the private sector to find suitable employment for children with disabilities when they reach the legal working age.

100. The Ministry of Welfare and Social Security has been seeking to build capacity among specialists and other personnel working in the field of habilitation and rehabilitation by providing training in the following areas:

- Self-improvement;

- Administration of social institutions;
- Training in appropriate individual handicrafts;
- Measurement and diagnosis of autism.

Article 27: Work and employment

101. The Sudan recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. Article 12 of the Sudanese National Constitution of 2005 reads as follows:

1. The State shall develop policies and strategies to ensure social justice among all the people of the Sudan by ensuring means of livelihood and employment opportunities. The State shall also encourage mutual assistance, self-help, cooperation and charity;
2. No qualified person shall be denied access to a profession or employment on the basis of disability; persons with special needs and the elderly shall have the right to participate in social, occupational, creative or recreational activities.

102. The State has introduced programmes and policies which aim to ensure full and productive employment among persons with disabilities. Paragraph (e) in Part II of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009 upholds the right of persons with disabilities to be employed in government agencies while article 24, paragraph 7, of the Civil Service Act of 2007 allocates a fixed proportion of posts to persons with disabilities. According to that article, no less than 2 per cent of accredited posts in certain departments must accommodate persons with disabilities, taking account of the requirements of the job and the nature of the disability. This provision has been applied at most levels of government. Moreover, at the suggestion of the Ministry of Education, the Council of Ministers issued a decree in 2006 allocating 2 per cent of teaching posts to persons with disabilities and this has begun to be applied in certain provinces such as Nile, Gedaref, Kassala and Khartoum.

103. In order to ensure employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Human Resources Development and Labour prepared a questionnaire which has been distributed to all government agencies and the private sector. The aim of the exercise was to determine how many persons with disabilities were employed in those sectors and so help to ensure that they work in safe and healthy conditions.

104. With respect to participation in economic activity, the population census showed that among persons with disabilities in the age group 19 years and above, around 700,042 were job-ready, 600,791 were employed and 58,587 were economically inactive.

105. The State is endeavouring to strengthen the principle of positive discrimination for this important segment of society. In this context, it is seeking to create a suitable environment for persons with disabilities and has drawn up a national plan for the implementation of Sudanese building codes with the aim of ensuring easy access to and within buildings.

106. Since education forms the basis for exercise of the right to work, the State has instituted a set of measures to bolster educational opportunities for children with disabilities whereby they must be admitted to the school closest to their home on the strength of only one half of the basic certificate score. They are also exempted from the payment of fees at all stages of education, including university.

107. The State is helping to promote employment and access to self-employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Local municipalities in each province accord priority to such persons when it comes to granting premises for engagement in an occupation compatible with their disabilities, such as the sale of fruit and vegetables, shoes or ready-made clothes.

108. In order to offer the greatest possible access to technology and the benefits that it brings, the importation of enabling devices has also been simplified by making materials and equipment for persons with disabilities, such as special computers, exempt from customs duty.

109. Through the Higher Council for Vocational Training and Industrial Apprenticeship, 200 persons with disabilities have received training in various occupations, including the electrical trade, welding, computing, television and radio work and air-conditioning services.

110. The principle of equal opportunity is one of the fundamental principles provided for in the Constitution and laws. In pursuit of this goal, the State has amended several laws.

Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection

111. The Sudan is classified as one of the least developed countries and poverty there is increasing. The authorities are implementing a strategy to curb poverty which they hope to reduce by 50 per cent by the beginning of 2015. In order to ensure that the principle of universal equality is implemented without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, colour or health status, and to guarantee an adequate standard of living and social protection, Part II of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2009 on privileges, exemptions and facilities contains the following provisions:

- Paragraph (i) stipulates that persons with disabilities are to be covered by social insurance;
- Paragraph (r) designates the proportion of land in the public housing plan to be allocated to persons with disabilities;
- Paragraph (w) stipulates that compensatory and assistive devices for work, movement or education are exempt from customs duty.

112. The State has taken the following steps to curb poverty and reduce its effects on persons with disabilities:

(a) By the beginning of 2011, 20 per cent of persons with disabilities had benefited from the free health care provided at medical establishments in the capital and the provinces, as well as from the services offered at the seven prosthetic/orthotic centres;

(b) In the context of fighting poverty among persons with disabilities, 403 such persons received training in income-generating projects of a socioeconomic nature. The training was funded by the Higher Institute of Zakat Sciences and covered such areas as metalworking, commerce, the electrical trade, refrigeration, computing, ceramics, glass-making, perfumery and leather goods production;

(c) The Ministry of Welfare and Social Security, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, has provided financial support amounting to over 1 billion Sudanese pounds for the period 2009-2011 to help the following organizations of persons with disabilities to carry out their activities: the National Centre for the Rehabilitation of Blind Persons; the National Federation of Blind Persons; the National Federation of Persons with Motor Disabilities; and the National Federation of Deaf Persons. Homes for persons with disabilities also received 45 million Sudanese pounds in support and maintenance;

(d) The Zakat Office has provided financial support for the purchase of motor vehicles, bicycles, recording devices, white sticks and artificial limbs.

Article 29: Participation in political and public life

113. The State has a legal framework in place to safeguard the political rights of persons with disabilities. Article 40, paragraph 1, of the Sudanese Interim National Constitution reads: “The right to peaceful assembly shall be guaranteed; every person shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form or join political parties, associations and trade or professional unions for the protection of his or her interests.”

114. With respect to participation in public life, article 41, paragraph 2, of the Constitution stipulates that every citizen has the right to participate in public affairs through voting, as prescribed by law. Every citizen who has attained the age specified by the Constitution or the law has the right to vote in periodic elections guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electorate through secret public ballot.

115. During the elections held in the Sudan in 2010, the Higher Electoral Commission adopted measures to guarantee political participation, running programmes to raise awareness of voting procedures and providing escorts for voters. If no escort was available, the task was undertaken by the head of the polling station, without any influence being brought to bear on the person being escorted to vote.

116. The Voluntary Work Act of 2006 regulates the role of associations in the area of disability, stating in article 17 that civil society organizations with common causes, a grass-roots geographical reach and overarching purposes may form a federation for their common cause. Organizations of persons with special needs are likewise permitted to establish a federation to tend to their joint affairs and defend issues of concern to them.

117. In order to safeguard this right, various measures were put in place to ensure that persons with disabilities could participate in the elections held in the Sudan in 2009. Those measures involved raising awareness about voting procedures and providing escorts for voters with disabilities. If no escort was available, the task was undertaken by the head of the polling station, without any influence being brought to bear on the person being escorted to vote.

118. By exercising their right to run for election and hold office, a number of persons with disabilities have been elected to national and provincial councils and as Members of Parliament.

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

119. The State has taken various measures to uphold the right of persons with disabilities to participate in cultural life and sporting activities at all levels on an equal footing with others. The National Council for Disabilities has been working in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to develop a comprehensive sports strategy for persons with disabilities, helping them discover their gifts and fulfil their potential. Efforts to provide a supportive environment have been made at both an official and a popular level, also with the involvement of companies and of civil society organizations, in a manner duly regulated by law. There are also inter-provincial sporting activities for persons with disabilities.

120. In order to promote respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, and to combat stereotyping, the National Council for Disabilities has worked with other organizations on awareness-raising programmes through the media (radio, television and

the press), focusing on issues which affect persons with disabilities and highlighting their capacities. Sixteen monthly discussion forums have been organized on various aspects of disability using the knowledge of persons and associations active in that field.

121. The Disabled Sports Federation of the Sudan was established in 1994 within the framework of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Act. In keeping with an international trend away from the expression “disabled sports” to that of “Paralympics”, the name of the Federation was changed in 2006 to the Sudanese Paralympic Committee. The Committee concerns itself with all categories of persons with disabilities, developing their capacities and, thanks to effective national and international partnerships, contributing to the winning of a number of medals.

122. Organizations of persons with disabilities offer regular cultural activities for their members and hold public festivals in which persons with disabilities can showcase their multiple skills and gifts. The State offers annual support to these activities in order to give persons with disabilities the opportunity to display their talents and to raise awareness in society against a stereotypical vision of disability.

Article 31: Statistics and data collection

123. The Sudan recognizes the importance of statistics, data and research. The backbone of its efforts in that regard is the work done by the Central Bureau of Statistics which gathers both quantitative and qualitative data. The results of the most recent census in 2008 showed that 4.8 per cent of the population have some form of disability and determined disaggregated percentages for each separate kind of disability. There is, however, no single centralized database for persons with disabilities which reflects international and national standards for monitoring, classification and statistics and would enable persons with disabilities to identify areas of weakness and strength and help them to harness best practice to give effect to their rights.

Article 32: International cooperation

124. The Sudan recognizes the importance of international cooperation. It is working to achieve the goals of the Convention and to draw on international capacities and know-how for the implementation of projects, the exchange of knowledge, the upgrading of training, especially among organizations working with persons with disabilities, and the use of advanced technologies to make qualitative progress and undertake academic research.

125. The Sudan is a developing country and has been involved in some of the longest wars in Africa, as a result of which the incidence of disability has increased. This means that more effective partnerships and optimal international cooperation are required in order to continue to implement the Convention in the coming phase.

126. The Sudan attaches great importance to strengthening international cooperation by harnessing global and regional capacities and expertise and transferring them to the national level. This should include technologies and technological development which are necessary for academic research and can help to promote qualitative progress. In this respect, the State has entered into several partnerships with United Nations agencies in order to support its service infrastructure. A draft cooperation agreement has also been drawn up with the Republic of Turkey to support disability activities in the Sudan and open up new areas for cooperation and the exchange of expertise between the two States.

127. The State is working in partnership with United Nations agencies such as WHO, the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF and other organizations which provide support for infrastructure in education, health and social services.

Article 33: National implementation and monitoring

128. Following the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the National Council for Disabilities was created to oversee its implementation in coordination with other government departments.

129. A number of independent institutions have been created. They include the Human Rights Commission as well as 17 provincial councils for persons with disabilities in the country's 18 provinces.

130. Specialized committees have been established to monitor, follow up on and evaluate measures to assist persons with disabilities. The outcomes of their efforts have been incorporated into the present report.

131. The Sudanese Advisory Council for Human Rights, which was formed in 1994, monitors the human rights situation in the country on the basis of the treaties ratified by the Sudan, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Its role is to ensure that those treaties are being respected and to advise the Government on any shortcomings or points of weakness in that regard.

132. Civil society organizations working in the area of disability and federations of persons with disabilities participate in the ministerial committees seeking to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Most of those organizations and federations contributed to the preparation of the present report.

133. The Council of Ministers and the National Assembly also concern themselves with issues which affect persons with disabilities. They demand regular reports from agencies working with disability in order to develop policies and plans in which all sides can participate and which ensure that disability issues remain on the agenda of government departments, which thereby have a full understanding of their responsibilities and duties vis-à-vis the rights of persons with disabilities.

Challenges

144. A number of challenges certainly remain. The most significant of these is the ongoing conflict in the region of Darfur and in other parts of the Sudan, which has had an inevitable effect on enjoyment by persons with disabilities of their full rights. We call upon the international community to put pressure on the armed groups to come to the negotiating table and support efforts aimed at putting an end to the conflict and establishing peace. The international community should also provide financial and technical support as well as training and capacity-building to national institutions as a way of helping to protect and promote the advancement of persons with disabilities and enhance their role in sustainable development through implementation of the national plan for disability issues.

Conclusion

135. In this initial report, the Government of the Sudan has sought to illustrate its endeavours and outline the status of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Sudan, showing the extent to which such persons are able to enjoy the rights guaranteed under the Constitution, as well as the international treaties

which the country has ratified, in conformity with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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