



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Concluding observations on the initial report of Lesotho**

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Lesotho¹ at its 818th and 819th meetings, held on 9 and 10 March 2026.² It adopted the present concluding observations at its 836th meeting, held on 23 March 2026.
2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of Lesotho, which was prepared in accordance with the Committee's reporting guidelines.
3. The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue held with the State Party's delegation and welcomes the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee.

II. Positive aspects

4. The Committee notes with appreciation the measures taken by the State Party to give effect to the Convention since acceding thereto on 2 December 2008, in particular the following legislation, public policies and institutional framework:
 - (a) The Disability and Equity (Procedure) Rules 2023, which came into force on 26 May 2023, providing for procedural accommodation for persons with disabilities in court proceedings;
 - (b) The Persons with Disabilities Equity Act 2021 (Act 2 of 2021), defining discrimination on the basis of disability, and introducing inclusive education, personal assistance and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities;
 - (c) The National Disability Mainstreaming Plan 2021–2025;
 - (d) The Inclusive Education Policy launched in 2019, defining inclusive education, and containing actions to combat attitudinal barriers in education;
 - (e) The establishment of the Persons with Disability Advisory Council as an advisory body to the Government, which supports the implementation of the Convention;
 - (f) The establishment, in August 2021, of the interministerial mechanism for reporting, implementation and follow-up, and its role in preparing the initial report of the State Party report in consultation with national stakeholders, including the National Federation of Persons with Disabilities.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 18 May 2026.

** Adopted by the Committee at its thirty-fourth session (9–27 March 2026).

¹ CRPD/C/LSO/1.

² See CRPD/C/SR.818 and CRPD/C/SR.819.



5. The Committee notes with appreciation that the State Party acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled, on 30 April 2018.

III. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

A. General principles and obligations (arts. 1–4)

6. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The Convention has been partially incorporated into domestic law, as the Persons with Disabilities Equity Act lacks provisions concerning private actors and only addresses some articles of the Convention;

(b) Legislation and policies rely on the medical and welfare approaches towards persons with disabilities, prioritizing prevention of impairment, early identification and rehabilitation;

(c) Discriminatory legislation against persons with disabilities, including provisions that restrict the exercise of civil and political rights on the basis of impairment, and the requirement of being “severely disabled” in order to access disability grants;

(d) Under chapter 3 of the Constitution, economic, social and cultural rights are considered only as principles of the State’s policy, which limits their enforceability in courts and their implementation through legislation and public policies;

(e) The lack of specific public policies and budgetary allocations for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities;

(f) The State Party has not signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention;

(g) The State Party has not ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa.

7. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) Adopt legislation to ensure direct application and implementation of the Convention in all areas of life and the recognition of obligations applicable to private actors;

(b) Ensure that normative and policy frameworks and practices comply with the human rights model of disability, by identifying barriers that impede the participation of persons with disabilities in society and ensuring that persons with disabilities can enjoy their rights on an equal basis with others;

(c) Accelerate the review of legislation, including in the area of civil and family law, nationality, education, health, social protection and voting rights, and of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, the Education Act and the National Assembly Electoral Act, with the aim of bringing them into line with the Convention;

(d) Introduce legislation recognizing the implementation and enforceability of economic, social and cultural rights, including those embedded in the Convention;

(e) Adopt a national strategy and action plans for the implementation of the Convention, with clear benchmarks, baselines and indicators, and ensure budget allocations for the realization of all rights in the Convention across all districts in the State Party;

(f) Adopt a time frame to ensure ratification of or accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention;

(g) Ratify or accede to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa as soon as possible.

8. The Committee is concerned that legislation does not provide for active involvement and close consultation with persons with disabilities in public decision-making, including in the preparation and implementation of legislation and policies and in the monitoring of the Convention. It is also concerned about the lack of consultation processes to ensure close consultation with and the active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in the process of harmonizing national legislation with the Convention.

9. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Institute the duty to closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, including women-led organizations, in all decision-making processes related to the development and monitoring of laws, policies and programmes that affect them;**

(b) **Ensure close consultation with and the active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in the process of harmonizing legislation and public policies with the Convention, and provide organizations of persons with disabilities, including those represented in the Disability Advisory Council, with funding allocations that allow them to develop their capacity and that of their constituencies to participate in public consultations.**

B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

10. The Committee is concerned:

(a) That disability has not been included in the grounds of discrimination under chapter II of the Constitution, limiting access to remedies by persons affected by discrimination on the basis of disability;

(b) That reasonable accommodation is limited to certain areas, such as employment and court procedures, and that denial of reasonable accommodation has yet to be recognized as a form of discrimination on the basis of disability;

(c) At the heightened vulnerability and risks of multiple and intersectional discrimination for persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, persons with albinism, women with disabilities, older persons with disabilities and persons living with HIV/AIDS.

11. **With reference to its general comment No. 6 (2018) on equality and non-discrimination, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Explicitly recognize disability as a prohibited ground for discrimination, and introduce reporting mechanisms, and remedies, such as compensation and injunctions for cases of discrimination on the basis of disability, including in its intersection with other grounds;**

(b) **Expand the scope of application of reasonable accommodation to all areas of life and recognize in legislation denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination on the basis of disability;**

(c) **Ensure that policies and programmes include targeted measures to eliminate discrimination, addressing the situation of all persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, persons with albinism, women with disabilities, and persons living with HIV/AIDS.**

Women with disabilities (art. 6)

12. The Committee observes with concern:

(a) The lack of provisions in the Persons with Disabilities Equity Act to address discrimination against women and girls with disabilities;

(b) The negative impact of poverty on women and girls with disabilities, in the absence of disability- and gender-responsive budgets and programmes to promote equality and economic empowerment of women and girls with disabilities.

13. The Committee recalls its general comment No. 3 (2016) on women and girls with disabilities, and recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Amend the Persons with Disabilities Equity Act, legislation on gender equality and other sectoral legislation to ensure equal recognition of women and girls with disabilities as rights holders, and uphold gender equality for them;**

(b) **Allocate human, technical and budgetary resources for developing and implementing public policies and programmes for fostering autonomy and empowering women and girls with disabilities, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of women and girls with disabilities, through their representative organizations;**

(c) **Ensure that women and girls with disabilities are closely consulted and actively engaged in efforts to give effect to the recommendations to the State Party issued by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.³**

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

14. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The limited information about programmes to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities in the community and to prevent abandonment and institutionalization on the basis of impairment, including the abandonment of children with albinism;

(b) The high child and infant mortality rates in the State Party that also affect children with disabilities;

(c) Societal practices that prevent children with disabilities from expressing their views and opinions in all matters affecting them.

15. Recalling the joint statement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the rights of children with disabilities (2022) and the guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies (2022), the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Modify legislation and policies, including the Children's Protection and Welfare Act, 2011, and the Child Protection Policy, of 2024, to ensure the development of support and access to services in the community for children with disabilities;**

(b) **Set up protocols to prevent child and infant mortality among children with disabilities, including through targeted programmes that ensure affordable and accessible healthcare for children with disabilities;**

(c) **Raise awareness among all actors, including civil society, about the right of children with disabilities to express their views in all matters affecting them, and introduce protocols to guarantee the duty to provide age- and gender-responsive mechanisms to children with disabilities in all decision-making, including in the family, at school, in community life and in administrative and judicial procedures.**

Awareness-raising (art. 8)

16. The Committee is concerned about disability stigma, degrading treatment and harmful beliefs in relation to persons with disabilities, including persons with albinism, which perpetuate abandonment, concealment, exclusion and dehumanizing treatment. It is also concerned that termination of pregnancy on the basis of impairment of the fetus, which is provided for in the legislation, reinforce negative stereotypes and prejudices that devalue the lives of persons with disabilities, in the absence of information and support for expectant women.

³ CEDAW/C/LSO/CO/5-7, para. 22 (a).

17. The Committee, with reference to the recommendations issued by the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism,⁴ recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:

(a) Strengthen its efforts to disseminate the Convention and promote the realization of human rights in rural areas and across all districts;

(b) Speed up the adoption of a national strategy on albinism;

(c) Adopt a national strategy to raise awareness about the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities, and about the harmful effects of beliefs and misconceptions against persons with disabilities. The State Party should look for the engagement of stakeholders in urban and rural areas, including among community leaders and schoolteachers, in workplaces and in the media, among healthcare providers and religious leaders, in cultural centres, and in the highlands and lower lands;

(d) Set up periodic mechanisms, including public consultations, with the aim of assessing progress in combating negative stereotypes against persons with disabilities, especially affecting persons with albinism, women and girls with disabilities, and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;

(e) Address discriminatory stereotypes against persons with disabilities, by raising awareness among all, especially among medical professionals and service providers, of the inherent worth and dignity, and contributions, of persons with disabilities, and the need to eliminate negative attitudes against them. Ensure human rights-based counselling and support for parents, and address social and economic pressures that influence decisions concerning termination of pregnancy.

Accessibility (art. 9)

18. The Committee observes with concern:

(a) The persistence of widespread and systemic barriers to access transport, infrastructure, information and communication systems on an equal basis with others, and the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with accessibility standards, including those in the Persons with Disabilities Equity Act and the Building Control Act;

(b) The lack of accessibility to public transport, including refusal of persons with disabilities who require additional time to access vehicles operated by public service providers, and the lack of accessible signage in transport hubs;

(c) That public information and public websites are not developed in accessible formats;

(d) That public procurement processes do not require accessibility.

19. Recalling its general comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Adopt and effectively enforce binding accessibility standards across all sectors, including transport, infrastructure, information and communication systems and public procurement, and establish clear accountability mechanisms, including sanctions for non-compliance and independent monitoring, to ensure their full implementation;

(b) Adopt and implement a comprehensive strategy for accessibility, in all dimensions prescribed in the Convention, and introduce a monitoring mechanism, targets, and indicators of progress concerning accessibility, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations;

⁴ [A/HRC/58/57/Add.2](#), para. 82.

(c) **Adopt measures to combat discriminatory practices among private service providers, and establish legal requirements to be complied with regarding accessibility of public transport;**

(d) **Set up targets for the continuous development of accessible public websites and of public information in accessible formats, using Easy Read, screen readers, captioning and sign language;**

(e) **Ensure compliance with existing laws on physical accessibility, and accessible information about public transport;**

(f) **Adopt provisions to make accessibility a compulsory requirement in procurement procedures.**

Right to life (art. 10)

20. The Committee observes with concern:

(a) The lack of information concerning measures to prevent deaths of children with disabilities, particularly children affected by intersectional discrimination due to a situation of poverty, institutionalization, isolation and/or albinism, persons affected by leprosy and persons living with HIV/AIDS;

(b) The harmful effects of forced abortion on the lives and health of women with disabilities.

21. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Include specific protections in relation to the right to life of persons with disabilities, including persons with albinism, children with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, persons with disabilities living with HIV/AIDS and persons affected by leprosy;**

(b) **Launch public education campaigns to dispel myths about disabilities, targeting communities, schools and traditional leaders, and implement State interventions, including safe shelters, psychosocial support and community-based monitoring systems, to protect persons with disabilities who are at risk;**

(c) **Adopt a strategy to prevent forced abortion, including by ensuring that expectant women have access to comprehensive support in decision-making concerning their sexual and reproductive rights.**

Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)

22. The Committee observes with concern:

(a) Legislation and national preparedness policies and contingency plans that lack specific measures concerning protection and safety of persons with disabilities in emergency situations, including due to disasters and internal displacement;

(b) The limited accessible information for persons with disabilities during emergencies, including with regard to evacuation warnings, security protocols, and protocols to prevent further exposure to risks;

(c) That needs assessments overlook barriers that persons with disabilities face during emergencies.

23. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Develop article 33 of the Persons with Disability Equity Act concerning equal protection of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, and review the Disaster Management Act, 1997, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy, of 2019, and the National Contingency Plan, with the aim of including measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities affected by disasters and by internal displacement;**

(b) **Develop information and early warning systems accessible for all persons with disabilities that take into account persons with disabilities living in rural areas and include a diversity of accessible communication tools, including sign language, Easy**

Read and text messages, as well as support during evacuation, adapted guidance, accessible shelters, registries, and transport;

(c) Adopt risk and needs assessments that are accessible for persons with disabilities and that identify barriers for persons with disabilities, measures to ensure equal access to humanitarian assistance, and recovery plans.

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

24. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) Legislation and customary practices depriving persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities of legal capacity and preventing them from entering binding contracts, owning property, getting married, inheriting, and engaging in financial and commercial relationships;

(b) The lack of a system for supported decision-making allowing persons with disabilities to express their will and preferences in all areas of life;

(c) Information about economic violence against persons with disabilities, in particular affecting women with disabilities under formal or informal guardianship, who have been subjected to property grabbing.

25. **The Committee recalls its general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law and recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Recognize the right of persons with disabilities to equal recognition before the law in the Persons with Disabilities Equity Act and abolish substitute decision-making from legislation, including from the Marriage Act 1974, the Deeds Registry Act 1967, the Administration of Estates Proclamation 1935, and the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act 1981, section 219, which was declared unconstitutional by the High Court in the case *Moshoeshoe and Others v. Director of Public Prosecutions and Others* (CC 14/2017);**

(b) **Raise awareness among persons with disabilities and in society of the right of persons with disabilities to equal recognition before the law, and ensure that the Convention, the Committee's jurisprudence and its general comments are made an integral part of systematic capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and lawyers, with the aim of enabling them to directly apply or invoke the provisions of the Convention in court and administrative proceedings or to interpret national legislation in the light of the Convention;**

(c) **Establish a system of supported decision-making for persons with disabilities in all areas of life, including formal and informal support, decision-making assistants, information in Easy Read and other accessible formats, advance directives, and peer support arrangements;**

(d) **Ensure that persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities, have access to complaints mechanisms and redress in cases of economic exploitation and conflict of interest, and ensure that service providers, including banks and other financial institutions, provide persons with disabilities with support with entering into contractual relations and the management of their financial affairs.**

Access to justice (art. 13)

26. The Committee observes with concern:

(a) Persisting barriers for persons with disabilities to participate in judicial procedures on an equal basis with others, and the slow pace in implementing the Disability and Equality (Procedure) Rules 2023;

(b) The lack of human, technical and financial resources in the Legal Aid Unit and the justice sector to implement procedural accommodations;

(c) The lack of information in accessible formats during judicial procedures, and barriers to accessing court buildings.

27. **Recalling the International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities, of 2020, the recommendations issued by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the State Party concerning women's access to justice,⁵ and target 16.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Introduce the right of persons with disabilities to participate in judicial proceedings, including as defendants and witnesses, on an equal basis with others, and ensure that prosecutions for alleged criminal offences provide persons with disabilities with age-appropriate and gender-responsive accommodations;**

(b) **Adopt a strategy and a time frame for establishing procedural, age-appropriate and gender-responsive accommodation for persons with disabilities in the justice system, including in customary dispute-settlement mechanisms, and ensure that individualized assessments of support in judicial and administrative procedures are immediately implemented across all areas of law;**

(c) **Strengthen capacity-building of the justice sector concerning the rights of persons with disabilities, including their rights in relation to access to justice;**

(d) **Ensure the necessary human, technical and financial resources across the justice sector to guarantee the access of persons with disabilities to court buildings, and provide persons with disabilities with information in accessible formats, including by appointing sign language interpreters as permanent staff in the justice system and intermediaries, and ensuring accessibility in procurement procedures for the maintenance of assistive technologies.**

Liberty and security of person (art. 14)

28. The Committee expresses concern about:

(a) Disability being a ground for deprivation of liberty in the Constitution (section 6 (h)) and the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act (section 172), especially affecting persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;

(b) Special verdicts and convictions of persons with disabilities for indefinite periods, in the absence of due process for establishing criminal liability.

29. **In accordance with the Committee's guidelines on the right to liberty and security of persons with disabilities,⁶ the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, particularly organizations of persons with psychosocial disabilities and persons with intellectual disabilities:**

(a) **Repeal provisions in the Constitution and the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act that provide for detention of persons with disabilities on the basis of impairment;**

(b) **Develop mental health services in the community, outside institutions or psychiatric facilities that are age- and gender-responsive, and adopt protocols for responding to individual crises which do not involve the use of forced medication, coercion and committal due to impairment;**

(c) **Revise the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, with the aim of withdrawing the practice of special verdicts, as it is discriminatory;**

(d) **Proceed to the release of all persons with disabilities forcibly interned, including in Mohlomi Mental Hospital, as a result of special verdicts.**

⁵ CEDAW/C/LSO/CO/5-7, para. 16.

⁶ A/72/55, annex.

Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 15)

30. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The delay in adopting a normative framework defining torture and ill-treatment as criminal offences, including with respect to acts of torture and degrading conditions that affect persons with disabilities;

(b) The vulnerability of children with disabilities to clinical trials, and the overall lack of information for persons with disabilities in accessible means, which curtails their right to express free consent in relation to medical or scientific experimentation;

(c) Information received about coercion, physical and chemical restraints and forced medication inflicted on persons with disabilities, and about degrading conditions in mental health premises.

31. **Recalling the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review,⁷ the Committee recommends that, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations, the State Party:**

(a) **Ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and its Optional Protocol, and expedite the adoption of anti-torture legislation, ensuring that it prohibits ill-treatment and torture against persons with disabilities, including medical and scientific experimentation in the absence of free consent, and forced institutionalization and psychiatric treatment, forced medication, and physical and chemical restraints, and that it introduces accountability mechanisms and redress for survivors;**

(b) **Stop medical trials and experimentation on children with disabilities until it establishes appropriate safeguards, including;**

(i) **A protocol to protect the best interests of the child;**

(ii) **Age-appropriate and gender-responsive information for children in Easy Read and other accessible formats concerning the procedures and their impacts on physical and mental integrity;**

(iii) **Legally binding procedures for private and public research concerning respect for persons with disabilities and accountability;**

(iv) **The training of all health and scientific personnel on the rights of children with disabilities;**

(c) **Conduct monitoring of all places of deprivation of liberty, including psychiatric settings and other residential institutions where persons with disabilities still live, with the aim of identifying ill-treatment and torture and implementing protection measures for survivors, including through deinstitutionalization and redress. Ensure the participation of persons with disabilities, their representative organizations and other civil society organizations in independent monitoring of places of detention.**

Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art. 16)

32. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About heightened risks for persons with disabilities of abuse and disability-based violence, including physical, sexual, economic and domestic violence, exploitation, trafficking in persons, violence and forced internal displacement by gangs, and harmful practices associated with witchcraft and ritual killings of women, including young, adult and older women;

(b) That some provisions in the Sexual Offences Act and the Counter Domestic Violence Act 2022 reinforce harmful stereotypes against women with disabilities;

⁷ [A/HRC/60/9](#), para. 136.

(c) That protection against gender- and disability-based violence affecting women, girls and older women with disabilities is absent from gender-based violence strategies;

(d) About the lack of measures for the recovery of survivors of disability-based violence.

33. **Recalling its statement of 24 November 2021,⁸ in which it called for action to be taken to eliminate gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities, and recalling targets 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **In close consultation with and with the active participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations, adopt a strategy to combat all forms of disability-based violence, that includes a national commitment with a zero tolerance of disability-based violence, awareness-raising programmes, including campaigns to combat negative stereotypes that continue to justify disability-based violence, and accessible, safe and confidential complaints mechanisms, together with training for the police to address attitudinal barriers and prevent dismissal of complaints;**

(b) **Review the Counter Domestic Violence Act 2022 and ensure that all forms of gender- and disability-based violence are defined as criminal offences;**

(c) **Ensure that the domestic violence strategy explicitly includes measures to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities, including women with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and women with albinism, in all settings where disability-based violence occurs;**

(d) **Establish a monitoring mechanism in line with article 16 (3) of the Convention with competency to monitor the situation of persons with disabilities in all services, facilities and programmes;**

(e) **Ensure that persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls who experience gender-based violence, have access to recovery services, such as counselling and psychosocial rehabilitation, support services and community networks for victims.**

Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)

34. The Committee is concerned about forced sterilization and forced abortion that affect persons with disabilities and that are portrayed as forms of safeguarding family honour, or protecting the best interests of persons with disabilities.

35. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Prohibit forced sterilization and forced abortion on the basis of third-party requests or authorizations, and introduce measures to combat harmful practices against persons with disabilities, targeting medical practitioners, traditional healers, families of persons with disabilities, and school personnel;**

(b) **Ensure mechanisms for complaint, investigate harmful practices and attribute responsibility for harmful practices against persons with disabilities.**

Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)

36. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) Legislation that denies applications for citizenship and applications for travel documents to persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;

(b) The lack of accessibility and of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities throughout birth registration procedures, and about situations of statelessness affecting children born to parents seeking asylum or parents who are refugees;

⁸ See https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2021/12/CRPD-Statement-25_11_2021-End-violence-against-Women-1.pdf.

(c) The lack of measures to gather information about the situation, and about measures to respond to the situation, of internally displaced persons in the context of megaprojects, resulting from severe winter seasons in the highlands and from violence;

(d) The lack of information about measures to ensure that asylum-seeking and refugee persons with disabilities can access temporary assistance and exercise freedom of movement.

37. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Amend Citizenship Order 1971, section 9 (1) (c) and section 12 (1) (c), with the aim of withdrawing provisions that avert applications for citizenship and for travel documents by persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;**

(b) **Ensure that district offices of the Department of National Identity and Civil Registry remove physical and informational barriers for birth registration, including through mobile registry in rural areas, and that birth registration is available for all children regardless of any asylum-seeking or refugee situation;**

(c) **Gather information and adopt policies to address the situation of internally displaced persons with disabilities, ensuring that resettlement, protection and humanitarian assistance is provided to them on an equal basis with others, in accordance with the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention) and other international law instruments;**

(d) **Ensure that all persons with disabilities, including older persons and persons considered to have chronic diseases, have access to temporary assistance provided to refugee persons and asylum-seekers, and that freedom of movement is ensured through the issuance of identity and travel documents for persons with disabilities.**

Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)

38. The Committee is concerned:

(a) That the misunderstanding of living in the community as meaning residential care is promoted in legislation, including articles 36 and 37 of the Persons with Disabilities Equity Act, and in policies relating to residential services for children with disabilities in children's homes and to government budget allocations for rehabilitation;

(b) About the overall lack of support for persons with disabilities in the community, compelling dependency on families and self-confinement;

(c) About the lack of individualized support for children with disabilities in the community to complement measures such as the monthly care dependency grant for children with disabilities;

(d) About the limited progress in ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities to services available in the community, and that access to some services, such as vocational training, has been restricted in the case of persons with physical impairment.

39. Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies,⁹ and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities on the transformation of services for persons with disabilities,¹⁰ the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities:

⁹ CRPD/C/5.

¹⁰ A/HRC/52/32.

(a) Amend legislation, including articles 36 and 37 of the Persons with Disabilities Equity Act, with the aim of recognizing freedom of choice to live independently and in the community, and redirect financial resources from residential care to accessible and affordable housing options for persons with disabilities in the community;

(b) Adopt a deinstitutionalization programme for persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities – with time frames, information in accessible formats, the provision of individualized support for living in the community, including personal assistance and peer support, independent budgets, preparation for life in the community for all persons with disabilities, and monitoring of progress;

(c) Develop support services in the community that are inclusive for children with disabilities, including personal assistance, peer support, supportive caregivers for children in family settings, crisis support, support for communication, support for mobility, the provision of assistive technology, support in securing housing and household help;

(d) Ensure the involvement of public and private service providers in concrete measures to ensure accessibility by all persons with disabilities to community services, transport, education, health, habilitation and rehabilitation, housing, culture, work and employment and vocational training. Expand the scope of vocational training and ensure that all persons with disabilities, regardless of the type of impairment, have access to it.

Personal mobility (art. 20)

40. The Committee is concerned about the limited availability of mobility aids, assistive devices and assistive technologies and forms of live assistance for all persons with disabilities.

41. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) Increase budget allocations for quality personal mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies for all persons with disabilities, including for their repair and manufacturing;

(b) Promote entrepreneurship, including by organizations of persons with disabilities, for the development of mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies independently and in addition to the government orthopedic workshop;

(c) Ensure the availability of affordable assistive technologies for persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities and persons with disabilities in rural areas and in the community.

Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information (art. 21)

42. The Committee is concerned that public information, including that on official websites, is yet to be made accessible for all persons with disabilities.

43. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) Ensure that the audiovisual content of government websites and broadcasts is accessible, and require radio and television stations to ensure access to news and programmes through sign language, captioning, audio description and Easy Read;

(b) Strengthen its budgetary allocations to ensure the continuous training and hiring of sign language interpreters across all public services available to the public, including schools, health services and the judiciary;

(c) Ensure access to Internet connectivity for persons with disabilities, including those living in rural areas, and ensure that freedom of expression is protected in law and in practice for persons with disabilities, through appropriate support.

Respect for privacy (art. 22)

44. The Committee observes with concern that persons with disabilities are exposed to the disclosure of information relating to their impairment and health situation, and overall personal information, to third parties, in the absence of measures to prevent interference with their right to privacy.

45. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Prevent interference with the right to privacy, including by eliminating substitute decision-making, reaffirming the autonomy of persons with disabilities in all areas of life, and raising awareness among persons with disabilities themselves, service providers and persons providing personal support to persons with disabilities about the right of persons with disabilities to privacy;**

(b) **Adopt measures to ensure that persons with disabilities, regardless of the type of impairment, are requested to provide consent concerning access to and management of their personal information, health-related records, rehabilitation and disability-related status by third parties;**

(c) **Introduce accessible complaint mechanisms, in case of arbitrary and/or unlawful interference with the right to privacy of persons with disabilities.**

Respect for home and the family (art. 23)

46. The Committee observes with concern:

(a) That denial of legal capacity in legislation and in practice deprives persons with disabilities of their right to marry and to found a family, and the exercise of parental rights;

(b) The lack of support for parenting by persons with disabilities, reinforced by negative stereotypes against the ability for persons with disabilities to exercise parental rights;

(c) That impairment of the parents or the child, compounded by situations of poverty, can lead to residential care and deprivation of the right to family life of children with disabilities.

47. **The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Repeal legislation restricting the right of persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities to marry (Marriage Act 1974, section 29 (2)), and develop awareness-raising programmes at the district and community levels to combat customary practices preventing persons with disabilities, particularly affecting women with disabilities, from entering into relationships, marrying, founding a family and exercising parental rights;**

(b) **Develop a strategy for inclusive and supportive services for parents with disabilities and families of children with disabilities in the exercise of their parental rights, including the provision of early and comprehensive information, and support in child rearing that is age-, gender- and disability-responsive;**

(c) **Adopt measures to prevent institutionalization and separation of children from families on the basis of disability, ensuring that priority is given to the right to family life of children with disabilities regardless of the type of impairment or degree of support. The State Party should ensure that, when applying the principle of the best interests of the child, State authorities give careful consideration to their evolving capacities and their circumstances in a manner that ensures that children with disabilities are informed and consulted and have a say in every decision-making process related to their situation.**

Education (art. 24)

48. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About children with disabilities not benefiting from free and compulsory primary education, in view of the provisions in the Education Act 2010 exempting registration and attendance because of disability, and about the high dropout rates;

(b) About the prevalence of special education through special schools, excluding persons with disabilities from quality and mainstream regular education;

(c) About barriers to accessing education, such as physical barriers as well as long distances to access inclusive schools in districts of the highlands, and about the fact that only some classrooms across the country have been adapted, about the lack of inclusive training pedagogy and of assistive learning materials in accessible formats, and about negative attitudes from peers and teachers;

(d) About the limited information about measures related to reasonable accommodation and individualized support for persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, throughout the education cycle;

(e) That few persons with disabilities achieve enrolment in tertiary education, and that vocational training has been curtailed for persons with disabilities on the basis of the type of impairment.

49. **Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party ensure disaggregated data collection concerning access to education by persons with disabilities. It also recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Repeal provisions in the Education Act that allow for exemption from school enrolment and attendance for children with disabilities, and require public and private education centres to promote school enrolment for children with disabilities starting from early childhood, including through information campaigns, open days and enrolment opportunities throughout the academic year;**

(b) **End special education and develop a national plan for transforming the education system into a quality inclusive education – including by ensuring budget allocations for inclusive education, introducing a non-rejection clause in respect of regular schools, prohibiting discontinuation and referrals from regular schools to special schools on the basis of the impairment or degree of impairment, and setting targets and time frames for the education system to be fully inclusive, available, accessible and affordable for persons with disabilities, including those living in rural areas;**

(c) **Develop national and district plans to remove barriers to access to education on equal basis with others, provide access to information technologies for persons with disabilities in school, design disability-responsive assessment tools and training methodologies, and increase the budget allocation for the development of learning materials in accessible formats for learners with disabilities;**

(d) **Ensure that reasonable accommodation and individualized support are provided throughout the education cycle, and adopt enforceable guidelines for schools on procedures for identifying the need for and guaranteeing reasonable accommodation and support, including for learners with complex support needs;**

(e) **Ensure the accessibility of higher education institutions, access by students with disabilities to loan bursaries for tertiary education, and support in the transition from secondary to tertiary education, and design vocational training for all persons with disabilities without discrimination because of type of impairment.**

Health (art. 25)

50. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The limited information about measures to eliminate physical barriers to accessing health services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, and about the outcomes of healthcare programmes for persons with disabilities;

(b) Barriers for persons with disabilities to express free and informed consent in relation to healthcare and to access information related to healthcare, in areas such as HIV/AIDS.

51. Taking into account the links between article 25 of the Convention and targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Ensure that mainstream health services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services, are made accessible for persons with disabilities, requiring healthcare professionals, equipment and premises to be accessible, and introduce specific targets for the realization of the right to health of persons with disabilities, including in the Sexual and Reproductive Rights Policy 2018 and the Village Health Policy;**

(b) **Recognize the right of persons with disabilities to free and informed consent concerning healthcare, and prevent third-party decisions in relation to health treatment, including treatments by traditional healers;**

(c) **Ensure that education, information, healthcare and services relating to sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, including treatment, advice and counselling, are made accessible to persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities, in age-appropriate and gender-responsive formats.**

Work and employment (art. 27)

52. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The unemployment among persons with disabilities and prevalence of persons with disabilities employed in the informal sector of the economy;

(b) The gender gap in access to employment opportunities for women with disabilities, as a result of gender and disability stereotypes and fewer opportunities for developing work qualifications;

(c) The low level of awareness about and provision of reasonable accommodation in the workplace;

(d) The limited impact of affirmative action measures to expedite de facto equality for persons with disabilities in employment.

53. Recalling its general comment No. 8 (2022), and in line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:

(a) **Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the open labour market, and provide support in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment, including in the agriculture sector;**

(b) **Adopt programmes for the promotion of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in employment, which ensure: (i) equal remuneration for persons with disabilities; (ii) accessible information on entrepreneurship; and (iii) non-discriminatory access to business services, infrastructure and technologies, occupational health and safety services, and mentorship and networking opportunities;**

(c) **Require employers in the private and the public sectors to comply with the duty to provide reasonable accommodation from the moment that such accommodation is required, and develop guidelines that promote workplace adaptation and flexible and alternative work arrangements for persons with disabilities;**

(d) **Develop affirmative action programmes for all persons with disabilities, including by establishing quotas for employment, and monitor progress.**

Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)

54. The Committee is concerned about situations of poverty and deprivation among persons with disabilities, in particular in households of children with disabilities headed by a single female parent, and about the insufficient coverage of the disability grant, and that the Disability Public Fund has yet to be established.

55. **Recalling the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to empower and to promote the economic inclusion of all persons, irrespective of disability status, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities:**

(a) **Strengthen programmes for income generation targeting households with persons with disabilities headed by women, and ensure that poverty reduction programmes include targets concerning economic empowerment of persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Remove medical assessments from the requirements for accessing disability grants, and ensure that allowances to cover disability-related costs are available for all persons with disabilities regardless of the type of impairment, including persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and periodically increase the amount of the allowances;**

(c) **Expedite the implementation of the Disability Public Fund, include participation of persons with disabilities in its governance structure, and ensure a progressive budget allocation, including through public-private partnerships and participation in financing.**

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

56. The Committee observes with concern:

(a) Sections 58 and 59 of the Constitution, which prohibit the nomination or selection of persons with disabilities for the Office of the Prime Minister and Parliament, and provisions in the National Assembly Electoral Act that prevent persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities from exercising voting rights;

(b) The lack of physical accessibility to polling stations and to electoral voting material;

(c) The limited provision of confidentiality during electoral processes.

57. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Amend the Constitution (section 58 and 59), the National Assembly Electoral Act and other relevant legislation so that all persons with disabilities can enjoy the right to vote and stand for election, regardless of guardianship, and adopt positive measures to promote the nomination and selection of persons with disabilities in national and district legislatures, the public service and the judiciary;**

(b) **Ensure access to polling booths for persons with disabilities, supply tools and instruments such as Braille voting sheets, make the ballot papers available to persons with disabilities via accessible technology, and have sign language interpreters available;**

(c) **Ensure the secrecy of the vote for persons with disabilities, and that when voting, persons with disabilities are allowed assistance from a person of their own choice.**

Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (art. 30)

58. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of accessibility for persons with disabilities to cultural facilities, libraries, museums, theatres and recreational centres;

(b) The limited participation of persons with disabilities in inclusive sport programmes.

59. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Identify barriers to cultural facilities, museums, recreational centres and libraries, and adopt a plan to promote inclusive and accessible facilities, ensuring that libraries have books available in Braille and Easy Read, and accessible digital resources, and conduct awareness-raising campaigns to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, in leisure and cultural activities and sports;**

(b) **Foster the participation of all persons with disabilities in sport, ensuring opportunities for engagement in competitive disciplines, and universal design of sports equipment and sports facilities.**

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)**Statistics and data collection (art. 31)**

60. The Committee is concerned about the lack of systematic collection of disaggregated statistics on persons with disabilities by ministries, departments and agencies.

61. **The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, establish data collection processes among ministries, departments and agencies and ensure that the available data inform public decision-making in all areas covered by the Convention, with data disaggregated by age, sex, gender, ethnicity, urban or rural location, place of residence, and migrant, refugee or asylum-seeking situation.**

International cooperation (art. 32)

62. The Committee is concerned about the limited participation of persons with disabilities in international cooperation processes and grants, and in the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.

63. **The Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that international cooperation programmes are carried out in close consultation with and with the active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities, including organizations of women and girls with disabilities, and that it mainstream disability rights into the national implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

64. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The limited information on the functioning and activities of focal points in charge of applying the Convention across sectors and at the national and district levels;

(b) The lack of resources for the Disability Advisory Council to allow it to carry out its mandate of implementing the Convention, including by participating actively in the current process of harmonizing national legislation with the Convention;

(c) The lack of an independent monitoring framework and mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the Convention.

65. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Appoint disability focal points across all sectors of the administration and consider creating a coordination mechanism that facilitates harmonized progress in giving effect to the rights of persons with disabilities;

(b) Provide adequate human, technical and financial resources to and strengthen the capacity of the Disability Advisory Council, for implementation of the Convention;

(c) Designate an independent monitoring mechanism in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and provide it with the necessary budgetary, human and technical resources to carry out its work to promote and monitor the implementation of the Convention, and ensure the active participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

D. Cooperation and technical assistance (art. 37)

66. Under article 37 of the Convention, the Committee can provide technical guidance to the State Party on any queries addressed to Committee members through the secretariat. The State Party can also seek technical assistance from specialized agencies of the United Nations system that have offices in the country or the region.

IV. Follow-up

Dissemination of information

67. The Committee emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. With regard to urgent measures that must be taken, the Committee would like to draw the State Party's attention to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 13 and 15, on women with disabilities and on children with disabilities, in paragraph 49, on education, and in paragraph 55, on an adequate standard of living and social protection.

68. The Committee requests the State Party to implement the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. It recommends that the State Party transmit the concluding observations for consideration and action to members of the Government and the parliament, officials in relevant ministries, local authorities and members of relevant professional groups, such as education, medical and legal professionals, as well as to the media, using modern social communication strategies.

69. The Committee requests the State Party to disseminate the present concluding observations widely, including to non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities, and to persons with disabilities themselves and members of their families, in national and minority languages, including sign language, and in accessible formats, and to make them available on the government website on human rights.

70. The Committee strongly encourages the State Party to involve civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, in the preparation of its periodic reports.

Next periodic report

71. The combined second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh periodic reports are in principle due on 2 January 2035, under the simplified reporting procedure. The Committee will establish and communicate the exact due date of the combined periodic

reports of the State Party in line with a future clear and regularized schedule for reporting by States Parties¹¹ and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting for the State Party. The combined periodic reports should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

¹¹ General Assembly resolution 79/165, para. 6.