



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties  
under article 35 of the Convention

## Replies of Sri Lanka to the list of issues in relation to its initial report\*

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CGC	Child Guidance Centre
COSP	Conference of State Party
DCS	Department of Census & Statistics
DOSS	Department of Social Services
DPCSS	Department of Probation and Childcare Services
ESPD	Employment Support for Persons with Disabilities
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
HRCSL	Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
ILO	International Labour Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MRDSS&CE	Ministry of Rural Development, Social Security and Community Empowerment
NCW	National Commission for Women
NDMAP	National Disaster Management Plan
NGPD	National Games for Persons with Disabilities <sup>1</sup>
NIE	National Institute of Education
NSPD	National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities
PwDs	Persons with Disabilities
SSNs	Social Safety Nets
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VTI	Vocational Training Institute
YED	Directorate of Youth, Elderly and Disability

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.treasury.gov.lk/web/national-policy-framework-a-thriving-nation-a-beautiful-life>.

## Introduction

1. Since the submission of the Initial Report, unprecedented challenges were faced by Sri Lanka including the COVID-19 pandemic, Easter Sunday terror attacks (April 2019), the pandemic and global crises that led to unprecedented socio-economic challenges in the country, particularly in the year 2022. Despite these unprecedented challenges, Sri Lanka's democratic traditions and institutions remained stable.
2. Following a free, fair, and peaceful election and a dignified power transition in keeping with our decades of democratic practice, President Anura Kumara Dissanayaka was sworn in as Sri Lanka's 9<sup>th</sup> Executive President on 23 September 2024. The result of the Parliamentary election held in November 2024 reflected a collective and unified voice from people of all regions of the country and of all ethnicities and religions, supporting, with an overwhelming mandate, the government's vision for a positive transformation and rejection of divisive politics.
3. In November 2024, Sri Lanka formed one of the most inclusive Parliaments in its history including a record number of women and representatives of different communities. The Government's policy is deeply committed to inclusivity, ensuring that persons with disabilities have equal representation in all areas of public life. To support this vision, the first step was taken by nominating a visually impaired person to be elected to the Parliament under the National List, guaranteeing that the voices of persons with disabilities are heard in the decision-making process. This milestone reflects the dedication of the GoSL to ensuring the full enjoyment of political rights for all individuals, regardless of ability.
4. The 2025 Budget increased allocations for welfare and economic empowerment, including support for social welfare, health, and education, with a focus on vulnerable groups such as women, children, estate sector populations, and persons with disabilities (PWDs).<sup>2</sup> The National Social Protection Policy for Sri Lanka has been launched and the National Social Protection Strategy is being developed. The key pillars of the social protection policy include social assistance, social care, social insurance and labour market and productive inclusion programmes. Furthermore, the 'Praja Shakthi' National Programme, initiated with the aim of integrating all ministries and communities to eradicate poverty through inclusive, lifecycle-based and participatory development was launched on July 4, 2025.<sup>3</sup>
5. In order to strengthen the Social Safety Nets (SSNs) to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis on the poor and vulnerable, the Government initiated a new relief measure "Aswesuma" in July 2023. "Aswesuma" specifically targets four social categories, namely transitional, vulnerable, poor and severely poor. The government increased the spending on SSN programmes and incorporated measures to improve the coverage, reducing inclusion and exclusion errors and establishing SRIS (Social Registry Information System) to reach out to the targeted beneficiaries.
6. Several national focal ministries are working on the well-being of the PWDs in the country, namely the Ministry of Rural development, Social Security and Community Empowerment (MRDSS&CE) and Ministry of Health and Mass Media (MoH) and Ministry of Education (MoE). Based on the National policy on Disability, the National Council is authorized to take action through the National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities (NSPD). The Department of Social Services (DSS) which comes under the purview of MRSSCE also carries out several measures to protect and promote the rights of PWDs. The NSPD inter alia, provides several cash and in-kind benefits to poor people living with disabilities, which include: a monthly financial support benefit; self-employment, housing, medical, education and school material assistance; toolkits for self-employment; allowance for disabled vocational trainees; and assistive devices.
7. Some key areas where progress has been achieved thus far in relation to protection and promotion of the persons with disabilities are as follows:

<sup>2</sup> 2025 Budget Speech, <https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/96100697-0492-4c66-b2a2-71aeafa23404>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.prajashakthi.gov.lk/>.

- Proposed legislation on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is currently being drafted. This legislation is being developed in line with the principles and obligations of the UNCRPD, ensuring a comprehensive legal framework that upholds dignity, equality, and full participation in society.
- In addition, a draft legislation on sign language is also under consideration, recognizing the importance of accessible communication and the right of persons with hearing impairments to express themselves freely and independently.
- Existing accessibility regulations are being reviewed and new regulations are being drafted to align with current needs and international best practices.
- Preparations are underway to collect comprehensive data on persons with disabilities nationwide to enable evidence-based planning, targeted support, and effective policy implementation that protects their rights and dignity.
- The Government is currently in the process of reviewing and updating its national disability policy to ensure it reflects contemporary global standards and the evolving needs of persons with disabilities. We are also in the early stages of formulating a comprehensive and inclusive national action plan.

8. In this context, Sri Lanka has made significant progress in terms of recognizing and protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and fostering inclusivity.

9. This response seeks to provide information in respect of matters raised by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the List of Issues pertaining to the Report submitted by Sri Lanka under Article 35 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The response is sequenced in order of the items set out in the List of Issues document and may be read accordingly.

## Replies to the list of issues (CRPD/C/LKA/Q/1)

### A. Purpose and general obligations (arts. 1–4)

#### Reply to paragraph 1 (a)

10. In a significant step towards strengthening the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities, a new legislation on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is under consideration. This legislation is being developed in line with the principles and obligations of the UNCRPD, ensuring a comprehensive legal framework that upholds dignity, equality, and full participation in society.

11. Every Bill or draft policy relating to PwDs is carefully reviewed by the National Council for Persons with Disabilities for its observations. In September 2023, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka also submitted its observations and recommendations on the Disability Rights Bill.<sup>4</sup>

12. Please see response to Q. 31 (b) for more details regarding statistics and data collection.

#### Reply to paragraph 1 (b)

13. The National Council for Persons with Disabilities was established to formulate legislation and make decisions regarding the rights and welfare of individuals with disabilities. This Council represents both persons with disabilities and the institutions that support them. Drafting of specific legislation and Accessibility Regulations, is carried out by the Committee appointed by the said council.

<sup>4</sup> Para 12, Parallel Report to the CRPD Committee by HRCSL – February 2024, <https://www.hrcsl.lk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/HRCNL-Parallel-Report-to-the-Committee-on-the-Rights-of-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf>.

14. In 2022, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCNL) established a disability unit within the Human Rights Commission.<sup>5</sup>

**Reply to paragraph 1 (c)**

15. Although the GoSL began responding to individual complaints under the ICCPR in 2016, there remains a legal impediment due to a pending matter before the Supreme Court regarding the GoSL's recognition of the competence of the Human Rights Committee to receive and consider individual complaints under the Optional Protocol to the ICCPR (*Nallaratnam Singarasa Vs Attorney General*). The legal implications of the Singarasa judgment in relation to Sri Lanka's obligations under the Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, are currently under consideration in an ongoing matter before the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. The Supreme Court has reserved its judgement following the conclusion of hearing.

**B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)**

**Article 5**  
**Equality and non-discrimination**

**Reply to paragraph 2 (a)**

16. As explained in paragraph 14-28 of the initial report, the existing legislative and policy framework<sup>6</sup> includes certain provisions to prohibit all forms of disability-based discrimination in accordance with the Convention. The scope of these rights has been expanded through the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, which has the jurisdiction to grant equitable relief including compensation for the violation of these rights. Please refer to paragraph 32, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53 of the initial report for further details.

**Article 6**  
**Women with disabilities**

**Reply to paragraph 3 (a)**

17. The Women Empowerment Act No. 37 of 2024, passed by the Parliament in June 2024 establishes a National Commission on Women (NCW) tasked with safeguarding women's rights and offering remedies for rights violations. The Act aims to promote economic empowerment, particularly for women with disabilities.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment establish a framework to guide and standardize the development of laws, policies, programs, and mechanisms. It aims to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women in all spheres and structures of government as well as in the public and private workplace, community, family, and within the civic space.

18. The Legal Aid Commission waives income thresholds for women with disabilities seeking legal assistance, particularly in cases of domestic violence and maintenance, ensuring improved access to justice. The Office for Reparations, with IOM support, implemented psychosocial initiatives in 2024, including facility upgrades for female students with disabilities in Kilinochchi, Ampara, and Puttalam, and mobility assistance in Valachchenai.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hrcnl.lk/hrcnl-press-notice-on-establishment-of-disability-unit-within-hrcnl/>.

<sup>6</sup> Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 28 of 1996. Pls refer to para 14-28 of the initial State Party report for further details.

<sup>7</sup> Section 2(h) & 37.2(h)(1) of the Women Empowerment Act No. 37 of 2024  
<https://www.parliament.lk/uploads/acts/gbills/english/6348.pdf>.

### **Reply to paragraph 3 (b)**

19. Sri Lanka has taken a significant step towards inclusive governance by introducing a 25% quota for women in the polls for Local Government bodies. Furthermore, GoSL conducts leadership and political training programmes to support women's participation in governance, including women with disabilities. Advocacy for legislative reforms, including gender quotas in Parliament and provincial councils, is ongoing.<sup>8</sup>

## **Article 7**

### **Children with disabilities**

#### **Reply to paragraph 4 (a) and (b)**

20. Measures have been taken to ensure that children with disabilities are able to express their views freely. The DPCCS, for instance, ensures the participation of children with disabilities in children's clubs and children's councils.

#### *Awareness Raising to Combat Stigmatisation*

21. In November 2022, the HRCSL established a separate Disabilities Unit under the supervision of a Commissioner. The NIE has translated the UNCRPD and the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Need Education into Sinhala and Tamil languages in 2022 and conducted capacity building programmes in all 9 provinces in 2022 on special education. The NCPA has developed a pictorial booklet titled "Establishing a Methodology to Identify Children with Invisible Disabilities" in 2021 aimed at persons working with children with disabilities and the general public emphasising that these children should receive a full, effective and equal opportunity for social participation.

#### *Right to education for all children with disabilities*

22. The Ministry of Education implements special education programmes for children with special needs, while the Ministry of Health coordinates with the Ministry of Education to refer children to these programmes. These initiatives are set to be expanded comprehensively with government budgetary allocations.

23. Some Provinces have special education resource centres whose main role is to spread awareness on special education to teachers, principals, MOE officers and parents, and to provide technical assistance to teachers who teach children with disabilities. Training of Trainers programmes on universal learning designing for teachers have been conducted at the Provincial level. The Department of Social Services operates several centres for children with disabilities that work on increasing the skills of children with disabilities and admitting them to schools. The National Youth Corps has a fundamental course (life skills) for differently abled people leading to a suitable vocational training course.

24. The NIE conducts inclusive education training, preparation of curricula and teaching materials, and provision of training and degrees in special education.

25. A child can be admitted to school education only when they complete the age of 5 years. However, from 2022, children with special needs will be allowed to enter the Special Needs Unit when they complete the age of 4 years. For this, the Ministry of Education has issued Circular 38/2022 and Instructions. This will prevent delays in the learning process for children with disabilities.

26. Pls see response to Q. 12 a) and Q. 22 for further details.

#### **Reply to paragraph 5**

27. Starting from 2025, Skill Development Daycare Centers have been established by DSS at the district level for children with disabilities, including those with autism, aged six months to 18 years. These centers will be operated by the Department of Social Services under the supervision of the Presidential Secretariat. As part of the initial phase, steps have

<sup>8</sup> <https://beta.parliament.lk/en/learn/women-in-parliament/news/details/52>.

been taken to establish eight (8) daycare centers across selected districts. The centers will focus on the development of daily living skills, child guidance and behavioral support, pre-vocational and vocational skill training, as well as guidance for employment and self-employment opportunities. Through these services, the centers aim to empower children and youth with disabilities to lead independent, productive, and fulfilling lives.

## **Article 8**

### **Awareness-raising**

#### **Reply to paragraph 6**

28. Awareness campaigns have been organized to promote respect, eliminate stereotypes and inform the public on how to support PwDs, reflecting the CRPD's call for attitudinal change and social inclusion.

29. As a part of promoting inclusive education, awareness programmes have been conducted for university students to enhance their understanding of PwDs.

30. Awareness programmes help reduce stigma, promote inclusion and foster respect by challenging negative stereotypes and changing public attitudes towards people with disabilities.

31. The HRCNL regularly conducts awareness and education programmes for government officers, the police and the tri-forces on the rights of persons with disabilities.

32. The MRDSS&CE in collaboration with the University Grants Commission conducts sessions on Disability in the inauguration sessions for University students.

33. In an effort to enhance disability inclusion in the Parliament of Sri Lanka, a few selected groups of the staff and Members of Parliament went through basic sensitization sessions during the period from 18th to 23rd August 2023. This series of sensitization sessions is the very first step in the long-term process of strengthening the capacity of parliament on disability inclusion.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Reply to paragraph 7**

34. A list of respectful and appropriate terminology for referring to PwDs has been sent to the Ministry of Media to guide the development of inclusive media ethics. This initiative supports ongoing efforts to raise awareness and promote respectful representation of PwDs in public communication.

## **Article 9**

### **Accessibility**

#### **Reply to paragraph 8 (a) and 3 (c)**

35. In line with efforts to promote inclusive access to digital information, the government has issued Circular No. 11/2024, directing all government institutions to adopt Unicode compliant fonts across their official websites and digital publications. This policy aims to address barriers faced by PwDs particularly those using assistive technologies such as screen readers which often rely on standardized text encoding to function effectively. By mandating the use of Unicode fonts, the circular ensures that digital content is universally readable, searchable and compatible across platforms and devices.

#### **Reply to paragraph 8 (b)**

36. An inclusive support center has been opened at the Makumbura Multi Model centre (a long-distance bus service terminal situated in the close proximity to the Southern Expressway) to facilitate disabled passengers in Public Transportation. Employees with

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nspd.gov.lk/index.php/news/news-nspd/157-for-a-disability-free-social-life-work-shop>  
<https://www.parliament.lk/en/news-en/view/3481/?category=6>.

Special needs have been employed for the service of this Help Desk. The Support centre will provide passengers with many services such as an emergency notification number, ease of communication for hearing-impaired passengers and ease of access to information. The Ministry of Transport, Highways and Urban Development will assess the feasibility of introducing “Help Desk” in other major bus stations accordingly.

37. The 2025 budget included proposals to modernize the existing public transport system and enhance people’s access to both road and rail transportation systems.<sup>10</sup> Budgetary allocations have been made to procure 100 buses, and to extend the Kelani valley Railway Line (the railway line running from Maradana to Avissawella). Further allocations have been made to rehabilitate old passenger coaches and to produce new ones. Under the ‘Clean Sri Lanka’ project, allocations have been made to deploy 10 low floor buses with facilities for the persons with special needs.

38. Sri Lanka Railways (SLR) has instructed Station Masters and transport crews to assist persons with disabilities in using trains without difficulty.

39. Action has been taken to provide assistance to PwDs through Sri Lanka Railways (SLR) hotline (1971) during 24 x 7 and it is being implemented at present. PwDs are provided with the facility to inform about their requirements through this hotline and get assistance at the relevant railway station.

40. The Ministry of Health has published the Design Considerations on Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in 2013 ensuring improved accessibility.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the Disabled persons (Accessibility) regulations No. 1 of 2006 was published as a gazette notification.

## **Article 10**

### **Right to life**

#### **Reply to paragraph 9**

41. Sri Lanka legally, culturally and religiously, does not allow for the deprivation of life of anyone based on any type of disability at any stage of life. Any citizen can submit their complaints to different national mechanisms that have the competence and jurisdiction to receive and investigate any complaint relating to death or threat to life. These include law enforcement authorities as well as independent institutions such as the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka. Please refer to paragraph 57-59 of the state party report for further details.

## **Article 11**

### **Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**

#### **Reply to paragraph 10**

42. The National Disaster Management Plan 2023-2030 (NDMAP 2023-30) provides the framework and direction for the respective government institutions and all other related stakeholders about the specific responsibilities of managing disasters, at different phases. It also recognizes persons with disabilities as a key vulnerable group disproportionately affected by disasters due to varied disabilities. The goals of the NDMAP are explicitly in line with the Sendai Framework which sets the priority that “*Women and persons with disabilities should publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible approaches during the response and reconstruction phases.*”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/96100697-0492-4c66-b2a2-71aeafa23404>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.previousmoh.health.gov.lk/moh\\_final/english/public/elfinder/files/publications/list\\_publi/AccessibilityPersons.pdf](http://www.previousmoh.health.gov.lk/moh_final/english/public/elfinder/files/publications/list_publi/AccessibilityPersons.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.dmc.gov.lk/images/pdfs/NDMP\\_V2\\_withCoverV2.pdf](https://www.dmc.gov.lk/images/pdfs/NDMP_V2_withCoverV2.pdf).

43. News broadcasts are being delivered using sign language to improve access to information for persons with hearing impaired & promote inclusive communication during humanitarian emergencies.

## **Article 12**

### **Equal recognition before the law**

#### **Reply to paragraph 11 (a)**

44. The Constitution of Sri Lanka guarantees equality for all before the law and with respect to the enjoyment of their civic rights in all aspects of the law, via multiple provisions within it. According to Article 12(1) it is held that, “*All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law*”. Article 12(2) provides that “*No citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion, place of birth or any one of such grounds.*”

45. The Rehabilitation of Visually Handicapped Trust Fund Act No. 09 of 1992<sup>13</sup> supports the empowerment and rehabilitation of visually impaired persons in Sri Lanka by providing financial aid and services. This enables them to participate fully in society and exercise their legal rights, promoting equal recognition before the law. The Act helps remove barriers to inclusion and reflects Sri Lanka’s commitment to non-discrimination and equality for persons with disabilities.

46. Please refer to the response given to Issue 1(a) for further details.

#### **Reply to paragraph 11 (b)**

47. In addition to strengthening constitutional safeguards, the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 28 of 1996 provides explicit legal protection against discrimination in recruitment for employment and admission to educational institutions on the grounds of disability. This legislation serves as a critical legal instrument to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities, ensuring their full and equal participation in public life.

48. Rights related to accessibility are explicitly mentioned in the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 28 of 1996, ensuring equal access to buildings, facilities and services for PWDs. Revisions are being made to the Access Regulations for Persons with Disabilities to update the Extraordinary Gazette Notifications No. 1467/15 dated 17.10.2006 and No. 1619/24 dated 18.09.2009. These notifications were originally issued to ensure that government buildings, public places, and service areas are accessible to persons with disabilities. The current revision work is being undertaken by a Committee comprising experts in the relevant fields, with the aim of aligning the regulations with present-day requirements and standards.

## **Article 13**

### **Access to justice**

#### **Reply to paragraph 12 (a)**

49. Ensuring equal access to justice is a fundamental right for all individuals, including persons with disabilities. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by individuals with hearing and speech impairments in navigating the legal system, the DSS has taken proactive steps to uphold their rights and facilitate meaningful participation in judicial processes.

50. The DSS provides sign language interpretation services to support persons with hearing and speech impairments during court proceedings and during the recording of police complaints. These services are offered to ensure that affected individuals can fully understand and engage in their legal cases, communicate effectively with legal representatives, and respond appropriately during hearings and trials. By bridging the communication gap, sign

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.parliament.lk/uploads/documents/paperspresented/1695287089098259.pdf>.

language interpretation helps uphold fairness, equality, and non-discrimination within the justice system.

51. In addition, a draft legislation on sign language is also under consideration, recognizing the importance of accessible communication and the right of persons with hearing impairments to express themselves freely and independently.

**Reply to paragraph 12 (b)**

52. Please see response to issue 4 a) and 3 a).

**Article 14**  
**Liberty and security of the person**

**Reply to paragraph 13**

53. Please refer to the paragraphs 75-77 of the State Party Report.

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

**Reply to paragraph 14**

54. Sri Lanka has never had any practice that permitted medical or scientific experimentation on PwDs. Any medical or experimental instrument or medicine administered determined as necessary for their wellbeing has been under medical supervision and with the free and informed consent of the PwD, or legal guardian.

55. Please refer to the paragraph 78-81 of the State Party Report.

**Article 16**  
**Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse**

**Reply to paragraph 15 (a)–(d)**

56. Sri Lanka follows a policy of zero tolerance on sexual and gender-based violence, which includes PwDs. Following the adoption of the National Policy on SGBV in 2016, the National Action Plan (2016-2021) was adopted with a three-pronged approach: prevent SGBV, intervene in situations of SGBV, and advocate for policies and laws to combat and address SGBV. A National Action Plan to Address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence for the period 2016-2020 was implemented, and the progress review found a 70% level of implementation. UN agencies and other multi-sectoral service providers have supported the Child and Women Development Units of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MWCA) in the implementation of the National Action Plan.

57. Thereafter, a second Multi-sectoral National Action Plan (NAP) to Address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) for the period 2024-2028 was launched in 2024. This Multi-sectoral NAP includes key activities inter alia, focusing on educating and empower people/communities with physical and mental disabilities on zero SGBV and related rights as well as making available disability friendly communication/ interpretation services such as sign language at survivor service interface at police, judicial medical officer, hospital and court systems.<sup>14</sup>

58. Safe homes for women affected by sexual and domestic violence have been established in 8 districts (Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Kegalle, Trincomalee, Kalutara, Anuradhapura and Kurunegala) of the country to ensure their safety, mental and physical

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<sup>14</sup> <https://srilanka.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2025-01/National%20Action%20Plan%20to%20Address%20on%20SGBV%20ENGLISH%2020241218%20281%29.pdf>.

healthcare. They are provided with counselling/psychosocial support, legal and financial assistance and livelihood support is also provided if required. National guidelines for the management of shelters for female victim survivors of SGBV was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024. A toll-free helpline 1938 is operated under the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MWCA) which caters to complaints regarding SGBV. The National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) runs a 24-hour helpline 1929, for children allowing reports of child abuse through audio, video and written evidence. Additionally, the police operates a helpline 109 which also receives emergency complaints of gender based violence.

59. All laws related to the protection of women and children also extend to PwDs, given the non-discriminative nature of the law. For further details please refer to paragraph 82 of the State Party Report.

## **Article 17**

### **Protecting the integrity of the person**

#### **Reply to paragraph 17**

60. The rights guaranteed to every citizen of Sri Lanka, whether through the Fundamental Rights articulated in Chapter III of the Constitution, or the protection of their person through other laws including the Penal Code of Sri Lanka, also extend to all PwDs.

61. The importance of abstaining informed consent prior to any procedure is incorporated to the curricula and basic training of all healthcare workforce categories.

## **Article 19**

### **Living independently and being included in the community**

#### **Reply to paragraph 19**

62. The Department of Social Services (DSS) actively promotes Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) strategies that empower individuals with disabilities to live meaningful lives within their own communities. One of the main approaches used is the formation and support of community-level self-help groups, which are established and facilitated at divisional and district levels by Social Services Officers. These groups foster peer support, shared learning, advocacy, and community awareness. Through the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programme, nearly 150,000 individualized rehabilitation plans have been developed for persons with disabilities, with the involvement of social service officers, to provide comprehensive and uniquely tailored services. Necessary actions are then taken to deliver services in accordance with these plans.

63. Swabhiman National Award Ceremony, conducted by the Department of Social Services, serves as a platform to evaluate self-help organizations led by persons with disabilities from the grassroots to the national level. Under this initiative, evaluations are carried out across approximately 18 categories, including:

- The best-performing divisional and district-level self-help organization;
- A member who has successfully reintegrated into society at the household level through the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program;
- A person with a disability who has created outstanding artistic or craftwork;
- An innovator who has developed a novel solution or invention in support of persons with disabilities;
- Employers who have made significant contributions by providing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, and
- The best project or program implemented by a self-help organization.

- The primary aim of this national event is to promote and ensure the economic and social well-being of persons with disabilities and their families, covering the entire island.
64. The Department of Social Services, through the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) unit, provides direct assistance to persons with disabilities by supporting the provision of essential equipment and services. This includes the construction of commode toilets and accessible pathways, the purchase of water and air mattresses, the provision of electricity and water facilities, etc.
65. In collaboration with the International Labor Organization (ILO), preparations are underway to organize a trade fair in December 2025 that will showcase a wide range of products and creations made by persons with disabilities and self-help groups. This exhibition aims to highlight their talents, promote their entrepreneurial efforts, and create market opportunities for their goods and services. In parallel with the trade fair, a job fair will also be held to connect persons with disabilities to potential employers. This event will serve as a platform to facilitate inclusive employment by linking job seekers with disabilities to public and private sector institutions offering suitable job opportunities.
66. Government institutions have been made aware of accessibility related laws. Steps have been made to introduce a priority card for PWDs to facilitate easier access to services and support. For further details please see the response to Q.20.

## **Article 20**

### **Personal mobility**

#### **Reply to paragraph 20**

67. The DSS, through the Visually Handicapped Trust Fund, provides a range of assistive devices to support persons with visual impairments. These include white canes to aid mobility, specialized eye lenses, and mobile phones for university students with visual impairments, provided upon request. Through the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) unit, the DSS provides direct assistance to persons with disabilities by supporting the provision of essential equipment and services, such as the construction of accessible pathways and commode toilets.

## **Article 21**

### **Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information**

#### **Reply to paragraph 21**

68. The Government has taken proactive measures to eliminate communication barriers, especially for individuals with hearing impairments. One of the key initiatives is the provision of sign language interpreter services to the public sector, including courts, police stations, parliament, universities, and other government institutions upon their request. These services are made available to government institutions, to facilitate communication between public officers and persons with hearing impairments when accessing public services and news broadcast on mass media channels.

69. The DSS provides sign language interpretation services for certain news broadcasts to ensure accessibility for the hearing-impaired community. Specifically: Sirasa TV at 7:00 p.m. and Jathika Rupavahini at 12:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

70. To further strengthen inclusive communication, the DSS conducts sign language training programmes for government officers and private sector personnel. In 2024, the Department of Social Services recruited six new sign language interpreters and assigned them to institutions under its purview. With this addition, the department now has a total of ten sign language interpreters.

71. In addition, the Department of Social Services issues a special identity card for individuals with hearing impairments, as they are not easily identifiable within the general community. This helps address the challenges they often face in society due to their invisible disability.

72. The DSS provides financial assistance through the Visually Handicapped Trust Fund to prepare audiobooks. This support helps persons with visual impairments access educational and informational materials in an accessible format, promoting equal opportunities, independence, and full participation in society.

73. Please see response to Q.7 for further details.

## **Article 22**

### **Respect for privacy**

#### **Reply to paragraph 22**

74. Please refer to para 107–109 of the State Party Report.

## **Article 23**

### **Respect for home and the family**

#### **Reply to paragraph 23**

75. In 2024, to coincide with the International Day of Sign Languages, the Department of Social Services organized an awareness programme and medical clinic on sexual and reproductive health for both married and unmarried individuals with speech and hearing impairments. Additionally, a Badge with the Sign Language Flag and booklet, “An Introduction to Sign Language” launched to promote awareness and understanding of sign language. Please refer to the response to Q.6 for further details on awareness raising programmes conducted by the GoSL.

## **Article 24**

### **Education**

#### **Reply to paragraph 24 (a)**

76. Sri Lanka has made progress in transforming its educational services to be more inclusive, yet challenges remain. Efforts to integrate inclusive education have been guided by the National Education Policy Framework (2020-2030), International Conventions such as the CRPD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), alongside national policies such as the National Policy on Disability (2003) and Circulars 37/2020, 33/2022 which provides guidelines for implementing inclusive practices in schools. Please refer to the response to Q. 4 a) and b) for further details.

#### **Reply to paragraph 24 (b)**

77. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has appointed Special Education Assessment Committees in all 100 Zonal Educational Offices. These committees work with the Special needs children. The MoE collaborates with international agencies like UNICEF, JICA, and CEMCA to train teachers in inclusive practices. Recent initiatives include webinars and workshops that focus on addressing 14 types of Special Education Needs Students and integrating assistive technology.

78. Universities and teacher training programs in Sri Lanka have incorporated inclusive education modules into their curriculum, including postgraduate studies. Projects such as REACH-SS, supported by JICA, focus on creating inclusive environments by improving school infrastructure and accessibility. The Education for All (EFA) initiative, supported by UNESCO, provides technical assistance and funding for inclusive education programs, including resources for teacher training and special accommodations for exams. Broad participation from government bodies, NGOs and educational institutions ensures that the initiatives are inclusive and practical. Workshops held in 2023 and 2024 focused on finalizing action plans for implementing inclusive education nationwide.

79. Early intervention and inclusive education services are provided by the DSS through Child Guidance Centers located in Navinna and Hambantota operate under the Department of Social Services, targeting children with disabilities between the ages of 6 months and 14 years. These centers aim to support the holistic development of children with disabilities by enhancing their daily living skills and preparing them for integration into preschool and mainstream school education. By addressing developmental challenges at an early stage, the initiative helps ensure that children with disabilities have equal opportunities for learning, growth, and participation in society. This integrated approach promotes inclusion, reduces long-term dependency, and aligns national and international commitments to the rights of children with disabilities.

80. The Department of Social Services also provides targeted support through the Visually Handicapped Trust Fund to ensure equitable access to education for persons with visual impairments. This includes scholarships for children with visual impairments to facilitate their continued education, provision of mobile phones for university students to enhance their learning and accessibility, and financial allowances for vocational training programs tailored to visually impaired youth.

#### **Reply to paragraph 24 (c)**

81. The government has implemented initiatives, such as establishing Special Education Units (SEUs) in about 10% of public schools. These units aim to accommodate students with disabilities and integrate them into mainstream education. However, gaps in infrastructure and teacher training still hinder progress.

82. Awareness campaigns, such as those conducted by the MoE and NIE, emphasize reducing social stigma and promoting dignity for children with disabilities. They advocate for a shift from charity-based perspectives to a rights-based approach in handling disability issues.

83. There is a shortage of special education teachers, and many trained teachers shift to regular teaching roles due to challenging work conditions. Recent measures include strict disciplinary actions against such moves and providing targeted training for educators to better support children with disabilities. For this matter MOE has published teacher guides for Special Education teachers. Those books are titled “*Towards Inclusive Education Teacher’s Guide – 1*” (for students with severe disabilities at home) and “*Towards Inclusive Education Teacher’s Guide – 2*” (for students in special education units and special school students).

84. Facilities such as Braille resources and special exam papers for visually impaired students have been highly developed, and it is recommended that assistive technologies be implemented on a wider scale for hearing impairment.

85. Pilot projects like the REACH-SS initiative supported by the JICA,<sup>15</sup> are experimenting with inclusive models in selected schools. These involve systemic support for enrollment, capacity building for teachers and community awareness to create inclusive environments.

## **Article 25**

### **Health**

#### **Reply to paragraph 25**

86. The Ministry of Health through its Directorate of Youth, Elderly and Disability (YED) provides guidance for strategies and guidelines to promote health care facilities and health service infrastructure facilities, strengthen human resources for disability care & rehabilitation, strengthens advocacy and multi-sectoral coordination at all levels and to monitor & evaluate disability-related activities at national & provincial level.

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<sup>15</sup> [https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/project/english/srilanka/009/newsletter/c8h0vm0000f9y4bk-att/newsletter\\_01.pdf](https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/project/english/srilanka/009/newsletter/c8h0vm0000f9y4bk-att/newsletter_01.pdf).

87. Advocacy programs were conducted for institutional heads of the Ministry of Health (MoH) to enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in healthcare institutions. Plans to improve physical infrastructure—such as accessible entrances, disabled-friendly toilets and washing facilities, seating areas, wheelchair parking spaces, dedicated drug counters, and clear signage—have been incorporated into hospital development plans. Funding sources have been identified to implement these improvements across all levels of care.

88. Accessibility to rehabilitation services is enhanced across all levels of care through healthcare workforce training, improved provision of assistive devices by increased production, and the delivery of specialized services in government hospitals.

89. To support the rehabilitation and integrated development of persons with disabilities, and to help them become independent individuals, assistance is provided to low-income persons in the form of essential equipment such as eyeglasses, wheelchairs, walking frames, crutches, and hearing aids. In addition, persons with disabilities under the age of 60 are eligible to receive artificial limbs.

90. Financial assistance of up to Rs. 50,000/- is available for the purchase of special equipment such as artificial limbs, air mattresses, and water mattresses. Furthermore, financial assistance of up to Rs. 35,000/- may be provided for the purchase of spare parts for hearing aids.

91. Training of Health care workers on sign language has commenced. YED plans to establish a help desk in all hospitals with the information desk to help PWDs by providing documents, voice recordings and sign language interpretation.

#### **Reply to paragraph 25 (a)**

92. The WHO Assistive Products List was prioritized for the Sri Lankan context following consultations carried out by the Ministry of Health. It ensures that PWDs will be provided with the required rehabilitation services including access to Assistive Products ensuring Universal Health Coverage. Public is educated using mass media platforms on the available health services which is reachable for both urban and rural communities.

## **Article 25**

### **Habilitation and rehabilitation**

#### **Reply to paragraph 26**

##### *Rehabilitation services provided by the health sector*

93. There are seven rehabilitation hospitals in Sri Lanka which provide a wide spectrum of rehabilitation services to PWDs. A National Guidelines for rehabilitation and a National policy on disability provide guidance for equitable service for PWDs. The Government of Sri Lanka has given priority for accessibility facility provision for PWDs and issued a gazette notification on provision of accessible services for the PWDs.

94. Rehabilitation is a key focus in primary health care reforms, aimed at improving access to services for persons with disabilities (PWDs) within their communities. Home-based disability care, alongside elderly care, is provided to those in need through the Public Health Nursing Officer.

95. The Government of Sri Lanka has prioritized provision of services for the PWDs with recent budget allocations made for the disability care and rehabilitation including specialized services for children with special needs. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Ministry of Urban Development, provides services for landmine-injured victims, including injury surveillance initiatives.

96. Under the guidance of the Family Health Bureau of the Ministry of Health, Community Child Specialist Centers have been established in five districts of the island—Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Kandy, and Batticaloa to support children with special needs. Children identified at an early stage by Family Health Officers are referred to these centers for appropriate services. Training programs are conducted for Public Health Midwives to enhance their ability to identify children with special needs using child growth charts in the field and to take necessary measures.

*Community based rehabilitation programmes*

97. The Department of Social Services supports PwDs through Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programmes. The objective of this program is to empower PwDs to lead independent, respectful, and meaningful lives in their own communities. Through a rights-based approach, these programs promote participation, empowerment, and access for everyone.

98. Self-help group is a key part of the CBR approach supported by social Services Officers at the divisional and district levels, which facilitates a space for PwDs to collaborate, share experiences and raise awareness and reduce stigma. In addition, personalized rehabilitation plans are offered for each individual which is tailored to their needs covering basic services such as health, education and social life etc. DSS collaborates with government and non-governmental organizations and community groups to ensure the PwDs obtain support in a timely manner and to provide services effectively enabling full participation in their communities.

99. After these plans are made, the DSS works with other government offices, community groups, and non-governmental organizations to make sure the services are provided on time and in the right way. This team effort helps people with disabilities get the support they need to take part fully in their communities.

100. The DSS provides essential support through the Visually Handicapped Trust Fund. This includes financial assistance to ensure access to basic utilities such as water and electricity, which are critical for safe and dignified living conditions of the visually impaired. In addition, targeted rehabilitation assistance is offered to persons with visual impairments to support their functional recovery, adaptation, and reintegration into society.

## **Article 27**

### **Work and employment**

#### **Reply to paragraph 27**

101. The DSS provides vocational training programmes for youth with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 35, with the aim of enhancing their employability, self-reliance, and social inclusion. These programmes are delivered through 11 vocational training centers located across the country: Seeduwa, Ragama, Madampe, Amunukumbura, Thelambuyaya, Kalawana, Ketawala, Wattegama, Tholangamuwa, Kilinochchi, Batticaloa. Each of these centers offers free accommodation, meals, essential welfare items, and a daily allowance to support their participation and reduce financial barriers. Out of the 11 centers, the facilities in Kilinochchi and Batticaloa operate in the Tamil medium, catering to the needs of Tamil-speaking youth with disabilities. The remaining nine centers operate in the Sinhala medium. Across these centers, a total of 26 vocational courses are available. The training programmes are conducted over a period of one or two years, depending on the nature and complexity of the course. Upon successful completion, participants are awarded a government-recognized vocational certificate, which enhances their credibility and competitiveness in the job market.

102. Persons with disabilities are given access to the National Youth Services Council and Youth Corps vocational training programmes if they wish to follow relevant courses. Since there is no entrance examination, they can share their views and needs during the initial interview, which offers them a valuable opportunity to begin the programme. Special consideration is given to persons with disabilities, and there are already students with disabilities studying in these centres. All centres provide career guidance to support their

progress. However, students must still have the ability to follow the courses, as the quality of the programmes needs to be maintained. The Youth Corps also allows students with disabilities to sit for the Career Key Examination, which helps identify courses that match their abilities and interests.

103. In addition to facilitating job placements in the private sector, the DSS also supports graduates who wish to pursue self-employment by providing toolkits relevant to their field of training. Self-employment assistance of up to Rs. 50,000 per individual or family is provided to help start or enhance self-employment ventures, aiming to reduce poverty among low-income families of PwDs.

104. The Employment Support for Persons with Disabilities (ESPD) Project, implemented by the Department of Social Services with the technical support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), is a significant initiative aimed at promoting the economic empowerment and social inclusion of persons with disabilities through sustainable employment. The primary objective of the ESPD Project is to create and expand employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, particularly within the private sector. The project works closely with private companies to:

- Raise awareness about the capabilities and potential of persons with disabilities
- Identify suitable job roles and workplace accommodations
- Facilitate inclusive recruitment practices
- Match qualified candidates with appropriate job opportunities

105. The Department of Manpower and Employment of the Ministry of Labour has implemented several programs to support employment for PwDs in 2024. Under the thematic priority area focusing on job seekers with disabilities, two key activities were implemented to enhance their social and financial empowerment. The first initiative, the ‘Linkage Creation Program’, aimed to connect PwDs with job opportunities, resulting in 249 individuals securing jobs in 2024 and for 2025, the target is set at 250.

106. The second programme titled “*Sihina Sri Lanka Programme*” is a unique initiative designed to strengthen the network between PwDs and workforce. The project envisaged the following:

- Motivate and empower employees with disabilities by creating a platform to share their experiences, ideas, and success stories
- Encourage peer learning and networking, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose
- Offer career guidance, mentorship, and psychosocial support to address challenges in the workplace
- Work collaboratively with employers to reduce job turnover and ensure a supportive and inclusive work environment

107. As a result of this initiative, 719 persons with disabilities have been successfully employed from 2023 to 2025. To further strengthen employment support, Employment Support Units have been established within all District Secretariat and Divisional Secretariat offices across the country. “*Sihina Sri Lanka*” associations are also being formed at the Divisional Secretariat level, enabling continuous follow-up and monitoring of the employment outcomes of persons with disabilities. These efforts aim to ensure long-term success and sustainability in inclusive employment.

## Article 28

### Adequate standard of living and social protection

#### Reply to paragraph 28 (a)

108. As per the Gazette notification No. 1467/15 dated 17th October 2006<sup>16</sup> published under the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 28 of 1996, the Urban Development Authority has taken following actions in the construction of low income and middle-income housing projects, in line with the above-mentioned gazette, considering the following facts:

- Accessible lifts
- Accessible entrance with ramps
- Toilets with disability facilities at Community Hall
- Kerb Ramps near pavements
- Disable parking area
- Guiding & Warning signs

#### Reply to paragraph 28 (b)

109. The Government's social protection measures have included PwDs as part of the ongoing islandwide social safety net (SSN) programme. With effect from April 2025 monthly allowances for people with disabilities have been increased from Rs. 7,500 to Rs. 10,000.<sup>17</sup>

110. Aligning with the provisions of the National Social Protection Policy, the DSS offers the following assistance to the PwDs as part of their economic empowerment:

- financial assistance is offered to persons with disabilities for self-employment through Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programs at divisional and district levels, facilitating access to resources and training.
- To further empower youth with disabilities, vocational training programs are provided equipping individuals with the necessary tools and equipment.

111. In order to safeguard the well-being of individuals with intellectual disabilities, aged 16 and above, who lost parental or guardian support, the DSS provides lifelong care, shelter, and comprehensive welfare services through two dedicated residential facilities: Jayawiru Sewana in Puwakpitiya, which currently houses 82 males with intellectual disabilities, and Manusath Piyasa in Batugammana, which provides care for 32 females with intellectual disabilities. These centers serve as safe, supportive environments where residents receive ongoing assistance tailored to their needs, in line with the principles of dignity, protection, and inclusion.

## Article 29

### Participation in political and public life

#### Reply to paragraph 29

112. A visually impaired person has been elected to parliament under the National list, representing the interests of PWDs and ensuring their full participation in the political process and the enjoyment of political rights.

<sup>16</sup> [https://stateminsamurdhi.gov.lk/web/images/content\\_image/pdf/legislation/1467\\_15e.pdf](https://stateminsamurdhi.gov.lk/web/images/content_image/pdf/legislation/1467_15e.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.cabinetoffice.gov.lk/cab/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=16&Itemid=49&lang=en&dID=13080](https://www.cabinetoffice.gov.lk/cab/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16&Itemid=49&lang=en&dID=13080).

113. The Election Commission has undertaken initiatives to enhance accessibility for PwDs during electoral processes. These include providing basic sign language training for staff and election commissioners, improving accessibility at selected polling booths (using sign language posters), issuing identity cards for persons with disabilities in specific districts (with plans for nationwide expansion), and envisaging the development of braille ballot papers tailored for PwDs.<sup>18</sup>

114. The Elections (Special Provisions) Act No.28 of 2011 was enacted to make provision for a voter who is subject to a disability to be accompanied by a person to the polling station upon presenting a certificate of eligibility.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, any voter with a disability which prevents him from voting may be accompanied by a person who shall mark the ballot paper as directed by the voter in the presence of the presiding officer and another member of his polling staff. Furthermore, the individuals who are unable to travel to the polling station due to a physical disability can apply for a special transport facility to assist them in reaching the polling station.<sup>20</sup>

## **Article 30**

### **Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport**

#### **Reply to paragraph 30**

##### *Participation in sports*

115. Several measures have been taken to enhance participation of PwDs in sports activities. As a major initiative in this regard, the National Games for Persons with Disabilities (NGPD) 2025 was successfully held on April 3, 2025, at the Diyagama Sports Complex. This national-level event brought together athletes with disabilities from all 25 districts across the country, showcasing their talents, determination, and athletic excellence.

116. The selection process for the NGPD 2025 was conducted through a comprehensive district-level competition structure. The winners of the NGPD 2025 were given the opportunity to participate in the National Paralympic Games 2025, representing their districts and contributing to the national effort in promoting disability-inclusive sports.

117. Special focus has been directed towards the PwDs, with efforts aimed at reforming societal attitudes. Traditional names for certain cultural games—such as Kana Muttiya Bindeema (breaking the clay pot while blindfolded) and Andhayata Kiri Kaweema (feeding milk to the blind)—have been increasingly viewed as inappropriate or stigmatizing. As a result, organizers are now encouraged to adopt more respectful names, such as Vasana Muttiya Bindeema (breaking the lucky clay pot) and Sagayata Kiri Kaweema (feeding milk to your friend). This initiative aims to foster a shift in societal perceptions.

##### *Participation in cultural activities*

118. The Department of Social Services organizes a range of cultural and awareness-raising events each year to promote the inclusion, empowerment, and visibility of persons with disabilities in Sri Lanka. One of the key cultural initiatives is the “*Sith Ru*” Cultural Event, held annually to showcase and celebrate the artistic talents of youth with disabilities from across the island. This event provides a vibrant platform for participants to express their creativity through dance and visual arts.

119. In addition to cultural programmes, the Department also commemorates key international observance days that promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities:

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.kegalle.dist.gov.lk/index.php/en/news-events/732-training-in-sign-language-for-field-officers-and-electoral-office-officers.html>.

<sup>19</sup> [https://elections.gov.lk/web/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/LAE\\_2025\\_34\\_E\\_2.pdf](https://elections.gov.lk/web/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/LAE_2025_34_E_2.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> [https://elections.gov.lk/web/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/LAE\\_2025\\_33\\_E\\_2.pdf](https://elections.gov.lk/web/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/LAE_2025_33_E_2.pdf).

- International Sign Language Day – Celebrated annually on September 23, this day raises awareness about the importance of sign language in ensuring equal access to communication, education, and public services for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- International White Cane Safety Day – Observed on October 15 each year, this day focuses on the rights, mobility, and independence of persons with visual impairments. Activities include awareness programmes and events for persons with visual impairments.

## C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

### Article 31 Statistics and data collection

#### Reply to paragraph 31

120. Preparations are underway to collect comprehensive data on persons with disabilities nationwide to enable evidence-based planning, targeted support, and effective policy implementation that protects their rights and dignity.

121. The questions developed by the Washington Group (WG) were formulated in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to collect data on persons with disabilities (PWDs), specifically focusing on individuals who experience difficulty performing a set of basic universal activities. During Census data collection, the Census of Population and Housing adheres to UN-recommended concepts and definitions, ensuring consistency in data collection and enabling international comparability.

#### Reply to paragraph 31 (a)

122. The Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) has improved data collection frameworks by integrating disability-related questions into national household censuses and surveys. These measures aim to gather reliable data on demographic, socioeconomic, and health status of PWDs.

#### Reply to paragraph 31 (b)

123. *The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning* was included in the Census of Population and Housing 2024, and the two major household surveys of the country, the Annual Labour Force Survey and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2025 conducted by the DCS. This inclusion is part of Sri Lanka's ongoing commitment to gathering internationally comparable and reliable data on disability in line with global standards. This data enhances the government's understanding of the barriers faced by PWDs and provides factual basis for policymaking.

#### Reply to paragraph 31 (c)

124. The UNFPA, in partnership with the Department of Census and Statistics, launched national statistical data in braille, large print, and podcasts to ensure persons with disabilities have accessible information. This initiative empowers persons with disabilities to make informed decisions about their lives and strengthens their ability to advocate for inclusive participation. By providing data in multiple accessible formats, it helps remove barriers to information access and promotes equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to engage fully in social and development processes.<sup>21</sup>

125. NSPD has commenced the establishment of a database of persons with disabilities, in collaboration with the Department of Census and Statistics.

<sup>21</sup> [https://srilanka.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2025-07/LKA\\_Disability%20Knowledge%20Product%20F-%20General%20Audience%20.pdf](https://srilanka.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2025-07/LKA_Disability%20Knowledge%20Product%20F-%20General%20Audience%20.pdf).

## Article 32

### International cooperation

#### Reply to paragraph 32

##### *International cooperation*

126. The GoSL continues to strengthen its initiatives for persons with disabilities (PWDs) through strategic partnerships with key international organizations. These collaborations have significantly contributed to enhancing access to employment, vocational training, and economic empowerment for PWDs across Sri Lanka.

127. One of the flagship initiatives is the ESPD Project, implemented with the support and guidance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This project focuses on providing comprehensive employment support services for persons with disabilities, including job placement, career counseling, and follow-up support. As a result, a growing number of individuals with disabilities have been successfully integrated into the workforce, fostering both independence and dignity.

128. In collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the DSS aims to upgrade vocational training curriculum and training modules of apparel sector related courses within vocational training centers. This partnership aims to align training programmes with labor market needs and strengthen ties with the apparel sector, thereby creating targeted employment pathways for youth with disabilities.

129. Furthermore, through support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), financial assistance is provided to PWDs under two key areas: self-employment initiatives and special projects designed to promote economic inclusion and entrepreneurship. This financial support enables individuals to start or expand income-generating activities, contributing to their financial independence and community participation.

130. Child Fund Sri Lanka has also been a longstanding partner of the Department, providing support across multiple areas. Their contributions include funding the preparation of guideline books, providing allowances for VTI instructors, and sponsoring major events organized by the Department.

131. Through these meaningful collaborations, the Department of Social Services is advancing its mission to create a more inclusive society where persons with disabilities have equal opportunities to learn, work, and thrive.

132. Sri Lanka assumed the chairmanship of the 18th session of the Conference of State Parties (COSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 10 June 2025 in New York. The 18th session of the COSP to the CRPD was held from 10-12 June 2025 under the overarching theme ‘Enhancing public awareness of the rights and contributions of persons with disabilities for social development leading up to the Second World Summit for Social Development’.<sup>22</sup> As the Chair of the Conference, Sri Lanka highlighted that the international commitments to equality and empowerment of persons with disabilities has been strengthened in the past decades, since the adoption of the Convention and noted the importance of full realization of the rights and inclusive development for persons with disabilities in the world. Sri Lanka highlighted the need for targeted investments and tailored solutions that address gaps in realizing the rights of PwDs as well as global cooperation and fair technology transfer as a tool of promoting global inclusivity.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Sri Lanka participated at the side event parallel to COSP on “Financing for Development: Opportunities to Accelerate Funding for Disability Inclusion” on the sidelines of the Conference.

<sup>22</sup> <https://mfa.gov.lk/sin/sri-lanka-assumes-the-chair-of-the-18th-session-of-the-conference-of-state-parties-to-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/>.

<sup>23</sup> [https://estatements.unmeetings.org/estatements/61.0320/20250610100000000/KSteulclIGjxY/-GIU\\_-Fb\\_nyc\\_en.pdf](https://estatements.unmeetings.org/estatements/61.0320/20250610100000000/KSteulclIGjxY/-GIU_-Fb_nyc_en.pdf).

## **Article 33**

### **National Implementation and Monitoring**

#### **Reply to paragraph 33(d)**

133. A stakeholder consultation was convened by the MRDSS&CE on 06 November 2025 with the participation of 14 Government line agencies to prepare the present report.

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