



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
17 April 2026
English
Original: Spanish
Arabic, English, French and
Spanish only

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

List of issues in relation to the combined second to fourth periodic reports of Panama*

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

1. Please inform the Committee about:

(a) The measures taken to strengthen the National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities and the National Advisory Council on Disability and to ensure that they have the sufficient financial resources and staff with the requisite technical background to carry out their mandates;

(b) The status of implementation and measurable outcomes of the National Policy for the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2020–2030, the Strategic Plan for Social Inclusion 2020–2024 and Act No. 15 of 2016, specifying the mechanisms envisaged to ensure the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in the implementation of those measures, particularly with regard to budgetary and legislative matters;

(c) The establishment, operations and results of the Equal Opportunities Offices specialized in disability issues and of the advisory committees, as well as the results of the National Certification Registration Platform;

(d) The measures taken to conduct a comprehensive review of the State Party's legislation to align it fully with the Convention, with a focus on, inter alia, the Commercial Code, the Civil Code and the Family Code, with the aim of repealing discriminatory provisions and pejorative terms in relation to persons with disabilities;

(e) The mechanisms in place to implement the Committee's concluding observations of 2017 and to ensure that organizations of persons with disabilities are involved in that process;

(f) The actions taken to ensure that the disability certification process, including for certificate renewal, is in line with the human rights model under the Convention, ensures the conduct of comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessments and is available in rural areas and Indigenous regions and accessible to asylum-seekers and refugees with disabilities.

B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

2. Please provide information on:

(a) The measures taken to ensure that denial of reasonable accommodation is recognized and punished as a form of discrimination;

* Adopted by the Committee intersessionally on 15 September 2025.



(b) Up-to-date statistics regarding cases of discrimination against persons with disabilities, disaggregated by the authority to which the case was brought, the victim's age, gender and type of disability, and type of discrimination, and regarding the investigations initiated in those cases and their results;

(c) The actions taken to ensure that cases of discrimination reported to the National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities are promptly investigated and those responsible are punished.

Women with disabilities (art. 6)

3. Please describe the measures taken:

(a) To ensure that public policies on gender and violence against women include a disability perspective and address the intersectional needs of women with disabilities, especially those living in rural areas, communities of African descent and Indigenous regions;

(b) To ensure that facilities providing services to women survivors of violence are accessible to women with disabilities and that the staff responsible for their care are appropriately trained;

(c) To ensure the sexual and reproductive rights of women with disabilities;

(d) To ensure that the orientation guide for women in situations of domestic violence in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic includes a disability perspective, and to collect statistics on women with disabilities who have made use of the guide;

(e) To ensure that women with disabilities, especially those who use wheelchairs, have access to gynaecological services;

(f) To set up hospital and community-based programmes to inform and guide women who have children with congenital disabilities.

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

4. Please provide information on:

(a) The progress made in repealing the provisions of the Civil Code and the Family Code that grant adult caregivers the authority to "correct" children and apply moderate punishment;

(b) The measures taken to ensure that the Children and Adolescents' Advisory Councils incorporate a disability perspective, as well as the existing procedures enabling children with disabilities to express their views on matters of interest to them and the mechanism ensuring that these views are taken into account;

(c) The academic and community strategies that have been adopted to prevent children with disabilities from being discriminated against and to foster humanism among children without disabilities and their families.

Awareness-raising (art. 8)

5. Please provide information on:

(a) Progress achieved in implementing the Committee's 2017 recommendation regarding public campaigns such as Teletón that reinforce the charity-based model of disability;

(b) Up-to-date results of campaigns to raise awareness of the content of the Convention and the rights of persons with disabilities, and to prevent public officials from making pejorative statements about persons with disabilities and punish those who do.

Accessibility (art. 9)

6. Please provide information on:

(a) The status of implementation, measurable outcomes and compliance indicators of the National Plan on Universal Accessibility 2022–2032, the technical advisory committees on universal accessibility, the Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development 2020–2025 and Act No. 15 of 2016 on accessibility;

(b) The measures taken to implement current provisions on public procurement, in particular those relating to the incorporation of universal accessibility requirements in accordance with the National Plan on Universal Accessibility 2022–2032, as well as their measurable outcomes and indicators;

(c) The mechanisms established for auditing, monitoring and ensuring compliance with universal accessibility criteria in accordance with the National Plan on Universal Accessibility 2022–2032, particularly in the implementation of public infrastructure projects;

(d) Any regulations, directives or technical guidelines that provide guidance or instructions to public entities regarding the obligation to include universal accessibility as a mandatory component in their procurement processes;

(e) Any technical or budgetary criteria or guidelines prioritizing public investments that mainstream universal accessibility, in accordance with current regulations and the relevant commitments undertaken by the State Party;

(f) The measures taken to reinstate audio announcements on the public transportation system, ensure accessibility through sidewalks and bus stops throughout the country, particularly in rural areas and Indigenous regions, and ensure that all websites and digital platforms operated by public institutions comply with international web accessibility standards;

(g) The results of the professional Master's degree in universal accessibility with a focus on access to the physical environment, offered by the University of Panama, and of the postgraduate programme on accessibility, as well as the indicators used to measure their impact on the lives of persons with disabilities.

Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)

7. Please provide information on:

(a) Any mechanisms to ensure that the disaster management programmes of the National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities and the National Civil Protection System incorporate a disability perspective on a systematic and ongoing basis and involve organizations of persons with disabilities;

(b) Measures taken to ensure that early warning systems are adapted to all types of disabilities and are available in sign language, Braille, Easy Read and pictogrammes and to conduct inclusive drills that address the specific needs of persons with disabilities;

(c) The measurable outcomes of the Guide to Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management in Inclusive Education Settings and the Signabulary (sign language vocabulary) for disaster risk reduction and rapid response in emergency situations, as well as the road map for the inclusion, protection and care of persons with disabilities in comprehensive risk, emergency and disaster management and the Safety Plan for Persons with Disabilities in Emergency Situations 2016–2019;

(d) The application of the Standards for the Inclusion, Protection and Care of Persons with Disabilities in Emergencies and Disasters, as well as the nature and measurable outcomes of training initiatives for emergency personnel on providing care to persons with disabilities;

(e) The number of persons with disabilities on the island of Gardi Sugdub, specifying how many of them have been relocated, as well as the measures taken to ensure that the relocation process included a disability perspective and was inclusive of persons with

disabilities. Please also provide information on the accessibility measures implemented at the locations to which the residents of Gardi Sugdub were relocated;

(f) The measures taken to ensure that public policies on climate change and climate-induced human mobility incorporate a disability perspective on a systematic and ongoing basis and involve organizations of persons with disabilities.

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

8. Please provide information on:

(a) Progress in implementing the Committee's recommendation to repeal legal provisions restricting the legal capacity of persons with disabilities, in particular articles 404 to 407 of the Family Code and article 45 of the Civil Code, and to abolish deprivation of legal capacity;

(b) Progress made in establishing a supported decision-making system that respects the autonomy, will and preferences of persons with disabilities.

Access to justice (art. 13)

9. Please provide information on:

(a) The measures taken to implement procedural adjustments, including in courts, prosecutors' offices and police stations, to ensure that persons with disabilities can participate in judicial proceedings on an equal basis with others;

(b) The number of judges, court registrars, prosecutors, public defenders and notaries with disabilities in the State Party;

(c) The measures taken to ensure the availability of sign language interpreters, guide-interpreters and personal assistants in judicial proceedings and to provide court documents in accessible formats (Braille, Easy Read and audio);

(d) The procedures in place to ensure that all persons with disabilities whose legal capacity has been revoked or who are institutionalized can challenge such declarations of legal incapacity and participate in the related legal proceedings;

(e) Any judicial training programmes on the Convention and the Optional Protocol, particularly in rural areas and Indigenous regions, with an emphasis on topics such as human rights and disability, inclusive language, appropriate treatment and the prevention of discrimination;

(f) The incorporation of a disability perspective into the system of community justices of the peace and into visits to the Ngābe Buglé Indigenous region under the access to family justice project, specifying how many persons with disabilities have had access to these services;

(g) The measures taken to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to free and accessible legal defence services.

Liberty and security of person (art. 14)

10. Please provide information on:

(a) The measures taken to adopt a national deinstitutionalization plan, with clear goals and an allocated budget, and to implement the Committee's guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergency situations;

(b) Any mechanisms for investigating violations of the rights of persons with disabilities in facilities and institutions, particularly at the national psychiatric hospital, and up-to-date statistics on complaints filed in this regard, specifying the investigations that have been initiated and their results.

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

11. Please provide information on:

(a) The measures taken to implement the Committee's 2017 recommendation regarding the explicit prohibition of practices deemed to be disciplinary or corrective against persons with psychosocial disabilities institutionalized in public and private psychiatric facilities or other centres of deprivation of liberty, and the adoption of any protocols to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise their right to free and informed consent in relation to any type of treatment;

(b) The free and informed consent procedure for persons with disabilities, with a particular focus on the procedure implemented at the National Institute of Mental Health and in psychiatric emergency rooms;

(c) Updated statistics on the number of persons with disabilities who are deprived of their liberty, disaggregated by place of deprivation of liberty, gender, age and type of disability;

(d) Up-to-date data regarding visits by the national mechanism for the prevention of torture to psychiatric institutions and hospitals, and any progress made in implementing the mechanism's recommendations regarding the solitary confinement of women with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;

(e) Investigations into cases of physical or verbal torture and sexual abuse against older adults with disabilities in facilities and hospitals, restrictions on visits and disciplinary and corrective measures, including details of the findings and the sanctions imposed.

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

12. Please provide information on:

(a) The measures taken to strengthen or enact specific laws to prevent, punish and provide redress for cases of violence against persons with disabilities, including differentiated measures for protection and access to justice;

(b) The measures taken to ensure that the Secretariat for the Protection of Victims, Witnesses, Experts and Other Participants in Criminal Proceedings and the National Commission for the Prevention of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents incorporate a disability perspective, and the manner in which they have protected persons with disabilities, particularly asylum-seekers and refugees with disabilities;

(c) The measures taken to ensure that the inter-institutional commission established to provide a comprehensive response to the issue of shelters incorporates a disability perspective, as well as the nature and measurable outcomes of specific actions taken to protect persons with disabilities in shelters.

Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)

13. Please provide information on:

(a) The measures taken to implement the Committee's 2017 recommendation on the prevention and prohibition of forced sterilizations and non-consensual abortions, ensuring that the free and informed consent of persons with disabilities, especially those whose legal capacity has been revoked, is obtained without exception;

(b) Any effective complaint and protection mechanisms for victims of violations of the personal integrity of persons with disabilities, up-to-date statistics on cases of non-consensual sterilizations and abortions performed on persons with disabilities, and the investigations initiated in these cases and their results;

(c) The measures taken to ensure that the Therapeutic Abortion Commission, coordinated by the Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme, incorporates a disability perspective, and statistics on written consent received from women with disabilities.

Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)

14. Please provide information on:

(a) The measures taken to safeguard the rights of migrants in transit, asylum-seekers and refugees with disabilities, particularly their right to access to healthcare, education, habilitation and rehabilitation;

(b) The situation of persons with disabilities who lack civil status documents, such as birth certificates and identity documents, including up-to-date statistics on this issue and the measures taken to address it.

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

15. Please provide information on:

(a) The progress made in implementing independent living programmes, including specific actions and budget allocations for this purpose;

(b) Public policies to ensure the availability of personal assistants for persons with disabilities;

(c) The practical outcomes of the Third Assistive Technology Congress on the theme of “Assistive Technology: From Theory to Practice”;

(d) Public policies on inclusive housing for persons with disabilities, specifying the availability of accessible housing, and any plans to revise Act No. 15 of 2016 with a view to establishing clear action plans and monitoring and sanctions mechanisms for buildings that do not comply with universal accessibility standards;

(e) The measures taken to ensure independent living for persons with visual impairments.

Personal mobility (art. 20)

16. Please provide information on:

(a) The status of implementation and measurable outcomes of Executive Decree No. 36 of 2019, which establishes health regulations on assistance or service dogs for persons with disabilities;

(b) The measures taken to prevent, investigate and punish the misuse of spaces reserved for persons with disabilities, specifying the number of complaints filed in this regard, the investigations conducted and their results.

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

17. Please provide information on:

(a) Measures taken to ensure that all public information is accessible to all persons with disabilities through all types of media, with an emphasis on the country’s Indigenous languages;

(b) The status of implementation and measurable outcomes of the 2017 Manual of General Standards for the Management of Information and Communications Technologies by Government, the 2018 Manual of Good Practices for the Care of Persons with Disabilities, the 2019 Guide on National and International Jurisprudence on Disability and the third edition of the Accessibility Manual.

Respect for privacy (art. 22)

18. Please provide information on the implementation of Act No. 81 of 2019 on the protection of personal data, which has been in effect since March 2021, with respect to persons with disabilities.

Respect for home and the family (art. 23)

19. Please provide information on:

(a) The progress made in removing the legal and practical barriers that limit marriage for persons with disabilities;

(b) The measures taken to ensure that women with disabilities can exercise their right to motherhood free from prejudice, to prevent them from losing custody of their children due to their disability and, where such cases occur, to review and reverse the custody decisions;

(c) The actions taken to revise Act No. 88 and Act No. 333 regarding the 144-hour limit on family support for persons with disabilities.

Education (art. 24)

20. Please provide information on:

(a) Up-to-date statistics on inclusive schools and schools with universal accessibility, as well as the number of students with disabilities in those schools, disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity, academic level and type of disability;

(b) Up-to-date statistics on institutions under the Panamanian Institute for Special Training;

(c) Inter-institutional collaboration between the Panamanian Institute for Special Training and the Ministry of Education;

(d) The measures taken to ensure the right to education for children with autism, hearing impairments or intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, and to make curricular adaptations that reflect the student's circumstances and needs;

(e) The status of implementation and measurable outcomes of the Universal Social Education Assistance Programme, the Special Vocational School of the Panamanian Institute for Special Training, and the Bachelor's programme in Panamanian Sign Language translation and interpretation at the Specialized University of the Americas;

(f) The measures taken to include sign language in the school curriculum countrywide;

(g) Total government investment in public education policies for persons with disabilities.

Health (art. 25)

21. Please provide information on:

(a) The measures taken to ensure the accessibility of all health system facilities by installing ramps, adapting sanitation facilities and setting up service counters to serve persons with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, communities of African descent and Indigenous regions;

(b) Total government investment in public health policies for persons with disabilities;

(c) Any comprehensive health programmes for the reintegration of persons with acquired disabilities into their families and communities.

Habilitation and rehabilitation (art. 26)

22. Please describe:

(a) The measures taken to ensure the availability of assistive devices, particularly for persons with disabilities who are deprived of their liberty, to integrate habilitation and rehabilitation services into the education system and to incorporate habilitation and rehabilitation services as an essential component of the basic care package provided by the Social Security Fund and the Ministry of Health;

(b) The number of persons with disabilities who have access to habilitation and rehabilitation services;

(c) The results of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Strategy, particularly in rural areas and Indigenous regions;

(d) Total government investment in public policies on habilitation and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities.

Work and employment (art. 27)

23. Please provide information on:

(a) Up-to-date statistics on the unemployment rate among persons with disabilities, disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity and type of disability, and on the number of persons with disabilities enrolled in programmes administered by the Department for the Socioeconomic Integration of Persons with Disabilities;

(b) The status of implementation and measurable outcomes of affirmative action measures for the recruitment of persons with disabilities, in particular the 2% hiring quota for businesses, as well as the measures taken to address cases where businesses opt to pay the fine for non-compliance with the quota;

(c) The status of implementation and measurable outcomes of Act No. 201 of 26 February 2021 on access to employment for persons with disabilities, as well as the technical training initiatives of the National Vocational Training Institute for Human Development;

(d) Total government investment in public disability policies with a focus on employment.

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

24. Please provide information on:

(a) The status of implementation and the results of social protection programmes aimed at promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities, particularly those living in rural areas, communities of African descent and Indigenous regions;

(b) Up-to-date statistics on beneficiaries of the Guardian Angel Programme, disaggregated by gender, age and type of disability;

(c) Measures taken to ensure that social benefits for persons with disabilities enable them to enjoy an adequate standard of living and access to basic services and prevent disability-induced poverty, and measures to establish a retirement programme for persons with disabilities.

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

25. Please provide information on:

(a) Statistics on persons with disabilities who have participated in elections as candidates or who hold elected office, disaggregated by age, gender and the position for which they ran and/or were elected, for the last two elections;

(b) The measures taken to bring electoral law into line with the Convention, particularly the terminology used in article 377 of the Electoral Code, and the status of implementation and measurable outcomes of the protocol on the accessibility of polling stations for persons with disabilities and older adults;

(c) Up-to-date data on the proposed electoral law reforms to establish, under the National Commission on Electoral Reform, a party secretariat to empower persons with disabilities;

(d) The measures taken to ensure that Act No. 184 of 2020 on gender-based political violence includes a disability perspective;

(e) The status of implementation and measurable outcomes of the Voting Accessibility Commission and the registry of persons with disabilities maintained by the National Directorate of Identity Documentation and the National Directorate of Electoral Organization, as well as the allocation of 15% of post-election funding to training for persons with disabilities in political action;

(f) The measures taken to ensure that the “The Court is with You” platform includes a disability perspective, and statistics on the number of persons with disabilities who have used the platform.

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

26. Please provide information on:

(a) Measures taken to ensure that public and private cultural, recreational, tourism and sports facilities and services are accessible to persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities;

(b) Measures adopted to promote accessible tourism as a source of State revenue for persons with disabilities;

(c) The status of implementation in the State Party of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled;

(d) The results of Act No. 175 of 2020, the General Culture Act, as well as tangible measurable outcomes as to how the law has benefited persons with disabilities.

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

27. Please provide information on:

(a) The measures taken to bring the State Party’s statistical systems into line with the Convention and to collect up-to-date data, disaggregated by disability and other intersectional characteristics, taking into account the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning;

(b) The results of the 2018 pilot study, conducted in collaboration with experts from the National Statistics and Census Institute, the University of Panama and the National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities, to update the methodological aspects of, tools for and validation of the systematization of the methodology for the Second National Disability Survey, as well as the measures taken to incorporate a disability perspective into the XII national population census and the VIII national housing census.

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

28. Please provide updated information on the functioning of the National Disability Observatory, in particular regarding the measures taken to ensure that it complies with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), with the active participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations, and on the measures taken to ensure that the national standing committee responsible for ensuring compliance with and follow-up to the human rights recommendations incorporates a disability perspective.