



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### Concluding observations on the initial report of Ghana\*

#### I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Ghana<sup>1</sup> at its 730th and 731st meetings, held on 19 and 20 August 2024,<sup>2</sup> respectively. It adopted the present concluding observations at its 748th meeting, held on 29 August 2024.
2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of Ghana, which was prepared in accordance with the Committee's reporting guidelines, and thanks the State party for its written replies<sup>3</sup> to the list of issues prepared by the Committee.<sup>4</sup>
3. The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue held with the State party's delegation and welcomes the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee.

#### II. Positive aspects

4. The Committee notes with appreciation the measures taken by the State party to give effect to the Convention, in particular the following legislation, public policies and institutional framework:
  - (a) The Mental Health Act (No. 846 of 2012) and the Exemptions Act (No. 1083 of 2022);
  - (b) The Child and Family Welfare Policy (2014) and the Social Protection Policy (2014);
  - (c) The Accessibility Standard on the Built Environment (2016) and the Building Regulations (2022);
  - (d) The revised Inclusive Education Policy (2024);
  - (e) The national Gender Policy (2023–2032);
  - (f) The Framework and Strategy for Disability Mainstreaming in the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies of Ghana;
  - (g) The approval of Ghanaian Sign Language interpretation as a profession with career progression.

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its thirty-first session (12 August–5 September 2024).

<sup>1</sup> CRPD/C/GHA/1.

<sup>2</sup> See CRPD/C/SR.730 and CRPD/C/SR.731.

<sup>3</sup> CRPD/C/GHA/RQ/1.

<sup>4</sup> CRPD/C/GHA/Q/1.



5. The Committee notes with appreciation that the State party ratified the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled in 2017.

### **III. Principal areas of concern and recommendations**

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

6. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Legislation and policies continue to employ derogatory terms to refer to persons with disabilities, such as “unsound mind”, “idiot”, “insane”, “imbecile”, “lunatic” and “mental derangement”;

(b) Progress in the development of the Persons with Disability Bill 2024, which is intended to, among other things, domesticate the Convention, has been very slow since it began in 2019 and remains incomplete;

(c) The references to persons with disabilities in article 42 of the Constitution, section 59 of the Persons with Disability Act (No. 715 of 2006), and sections 27 (a) and 58 (2) (a) of the Criminal Offences Act (No. 29 of 1960) are not consistent with article 1 of the Convention;

(d) There is an absence of effective mechanisms to enforce legislative and policy measures addressing the rights of persons with disabilities, and therefore to bring positive outcomes to the lives of persons with disabilities;

(e) The State party has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention;

(f) The State party has not signed and ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa, despite committing to do so during the Global Disability Summit of 2018.

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

(a) **Review and amend the Constitution, the Criminal Offences Act and the Evidence Act (1975) to remove derogatory terms and replace them with language in line with the Convention;**

(b) **Adopt a time frame to expedite the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Bill 2024;**

(c) **Ensure that all existing and new laws and regulations comply with the human rights model of disability in accordance with the Convention;**

(d) **Ensure adherence to the laws, policies and commitments to implement the Convention and uphold the rights of all persons with disabilities;**

(e) **Take the steps necessary to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention to expand access to justice for persons with disabilities;**

(f) **Fulfil its commitment made at the Global Disability Summit 2018 to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa.**

8. The Committee is concerned that women and girls with disabilities, through their representative organizations, have not been involved in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all laws, policies and programmes that affect their rights.

9. **The Committee recommends that the State party closely consult and actively involve women and girls with disabilities, including women and girls with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and those with albinism, through their representative organizations, in decision-making and in the development and monitoring of laws, policies and programmes that affect them.**

## B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

### Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

10. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) National legislation, including the Constitution, does not explicitly recognize the principles of equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities;
- (b) Multiple and intersectional discrimination faced by persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities, persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and persons with albinism continue to be reported;
- (c) Denial of reasonable accommodation is not recognized in law as a form of discrimination on the basis of disability;
- (d) Effective complaint mechanisms and remedies for disability-based discrimination and multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination are neither recognized nor enforced in law or in practice.

11. **The Committee recalls its general comment No. 6 (2018) on equality and non-discrimination and recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Align its legislation with the Convention and amend all relevant national legislation to explicitly recognize disability as a prohibited ground for discrimination and sanction discrimination based on impairment, and modify any policies that discriminate against persons with disabilities;
- (b) Provide legal protection against multiple and intersectional discrimination faced by persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities, persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and persons with albinism;
- (c) Take measures to ensure that laws are reviewed to guarantee the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of impairment in all aspects of life, including by legally recognizing denial of reasonable accommodation as disability-based discrimination;
- (d) Provide legal protection against disability-based discrimination, multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities and establish an accessible reporting mechanism and effective legal remedies.

### Women with disabilities (art. 6)

12. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) The Persons with Disabilities Act lacks specific provisions relating to women and girls with disabilities;
- (b) There are no disaggregated data on women and girls with disabilities;
- (c) Women and girls with disabilities have limited access to equality inclusive education, health and employment, and social protection programmes fail to reach women and girls with disabilities and their families.

13. **Recalling general comment No. 3 (2016) on women and girls with disabilities, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Align its legislation with the Convention and amend all relevant national legislation to address issues faced by women and girls with disabilities;
- (b) Implement measures in close consultation with and with the active involvement of women and girls with disabilities, including women and girls with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and women and girls with albinism, through their representative organizations, to collect data from all sectors, including those of health, education, employment, political participation, access to justice, social protection, violence, migration and internal displacement;

(c) **Ensure that public policies on education, labour and health are disability and gender responsive and include measures for access to information and communications. The Committee also recommends the provision of training for all professionals who provide services to women and girls with disabilities, including women and girls with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and women and girls with albinism.**

#### **Children with disabilities (art. 7)**

14. The Committee is concerned that girls and boys with disabilities lack adequate support and opportunities to express their views and exercise their right to be heard, including in consultations on the drafting of laws and policies.

15. **Recalling the joint statement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the rights of children with disabilities (2022) and the guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies (2022), the Committee recommends that the State party establish a national mechanism to enable girls and boys with disabilities to express their views and receive support, so as to fully participate in decision-making concerning their lives.**

#### **Awareness-raising (art. 8)**

16. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Public awareness of the Convention remains low and most individuals and communities continue to rely on the medical model of disability in dealing with persons with disabilities and, as such, discrimination and stigmatization persist;

(b) Persons with disabilities are incarcerated in rural communities on the basis of negative attitudes, myths and superstitions about disability.

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

(a) **Take measures to carry out awareness-raising campaigns on the rights of all persons with disabilities to promote their positive image through the media, schools, workplaces, cultural centres, religious institutions and official government websites, in urban and rural areas;**

(b) **Establish a comprehensive programme with mechanisms for evaluating results, targeting remote and rural areas, to eradicate myths and beliefs about persons with disabilities and, in particular, persons with albinism, in order to avoid practices that threaten their integrity and lives.**

#### **Accessibility (art. 9)**

18. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) There is a lack of implementation of laws, regulations and directives on accessibility to the built environment and of compliance with the Accessibility Standard on the Built Environment and the Building Code, and that the concept of universal design is not enforced in domestic law;

(b) Notwithstanding section 60 of the Persons with Disability Act, which establishes a 10-year transitional period for all public buildings to become accessible, 18 years thereafter, inaccessible buildings are still being constructed and organizations of persons with disabilities are not involved in the evaluation of the implementation of the standards contained therein;

(c) There is a lack of consideration of housing for persons with disabilities in the Persons with Disability Act and the ongoing affordable housing projects and other housing plans;

(d) Physical, communication and information difficulties persist in relation to access to public transport;

(e) Public information that reaches persons with disabilities is limited as it is not in accessible formats, such as Braille, Easy Read and sign language.

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

(a) **Implement and enforce the Accessibility Standard on the Built Environment and the Building Code with the active involvement of and in close consultation with persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations;**

(b) **Enforce compliance with section 60 of the Persons with Disability Act to ensure that inaccessible buildings do not continue to be constructed, ensure the active involvement and close consultation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, and establish regulations to require professionals in the construction industry to comply with the Act;**

(c) **Ensure the reform of the Persons with Disability Act and the ongoing affordable housing projects and other housing plans to address the needs of persons with disabilities in relation to accessible housing;**

(d) **Ensure compliance with existing laws on physical accessibility, and accessible forms of communication and information in relation to public transport;**

(e) **Ensure that information on services open or provided to the public is also presented in accessible formats, such as sign language, Braille and Easy Read, as well as other alternative modes and means of communication.**

#### **Right to life (art. 10)**

20. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) Reports of harmful cultural practices, such as infanticide and ritual killings of children with disabilities, so-called spirit children;

(b) That the enforcement of existing constitutional provisions prohibiting such practices is lacking, leaving individuals, particularly those with disabilities, at risk of practices that violate their rights.

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

(a) **Amend national laws to include specific protections in relation to the right to life of persons with disabilities, and take measures that strengthen sanctions, to ensure effective protection of the right to life of persons with disabilities, notably persons with albinism and children with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;**

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

#### **Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)**

22. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) The National Disaster Management Organization Act (No. 517 of 1996) neglects the disaster management requirements of persons with disabilities, failing to ensure their inclusion in disaster management legislation, policies and plans, and lacks a policy framework to address their requirements in emergencies, resulting in inadequate protection and support in situations of risk;

(b) There is a lack of accessible information and warnings on disaster risk for persons with disabilities, putting their safety and well-being at significant risk during emergencies;

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

(a) **Amend the National Disaster Management Organization Act to include the requirements of persons with disabilities in relation to disaster management,**

**develop a comprehensive policy framework that ensures their inclusion in legislation, policies and plans, make disaster information accessible, involve persons with disabilities in planning, and provide targeted support and resources for their protection and support in situations of risk;**

**(b) Make disaster risk information and warnings accessible to all persons with disabilities, regardless of the type of impairment, to ensure their safety and well-being during emergencies;**

#### **Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)**

24. The Committee notes with concern that:

**(a) The Constitution lacks specific measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise their legal capacity on an equal basis with others – the Persons with Disability Act does not address this issue either – and there have been insufficient steps taken to develop a comprehensive policy framework, with the necessary safeguards, to prevent abuse and protect their rights;**

**(b) There is a lack of participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes affecting their legal capacity and rights, with substituted decision-making still prevalent.**

25. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Amend the Constitution and the Persons with Disability Act to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise their full legal capacity on an equal basis with others, and develop a comprehensive policy framework, with the necessary safeguards, to prevent abuse and protect their rights;**

**(b) Closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities in decision-making processes affecting their legal capacity and rights, and eliminate substitute decision-making and replace it with a supported decision-making model.**

#### **Access to justice (art. 13)**

26. The Committee notes with concern that:

**(a) There is a lack of a comprehensive policy framework addressing access to justice for persons with disabilities, resulting in significant barriers to navigating the justice system, and the underresourced legal aid scheme is unable to provide adequate legal services to persons with disabilities who come into conflict with the law;**

**(b) Women and children with disabilities face barriers in reporting and accessing justice in cases of violence, abuse and exploitation, mainly due to lack of awareness, communication barriers and high costs;**

**(c) Police stations, courts and prisons often lack the necessary accommodations and accessible communication formats, such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, tactile communications and sign language interpreters, for persons with disabilities. Moreover, prison and probation officers, as well as other justice system personnel, lack adequate training on disability rights, hindering their ability to effectively support persons with disabilities;**

**(d) The justice system poses significant barriers, such as requiring persons with disabilities to pay for medical forms, confirming the abuse and mistrust persons with disabilities face from justice system actors. That mistrust, stemming from prejudices, often leads to doubts about the credibility of testimonies made by persons with disabilities, including allegations of sexual violence.**

27. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Develop and adopt a comprehensive policy framework addressing access to justice for persons with disabilities, as provided for in article 29 (5) of the Constitution and section 5 of the Persons with Disability Act, and allocate more resources to the legal aid scheme to ensure that it can provide adequate legal services to persons with disabilities who come into conflict with the law;**

(b) **Implement targeted measures to support women and children with disabilities in reporting and accessing justice in cases of violence, abuse and exploitation, including by increasing awareness, reducing communication barriers and lowering costs;**

(c) **Ensure police stations, courts and prisons are equipped with the necessary procedural accommodations and accessible communication methods, such as Braille, large print, tactile communications and sign language interpreters, and provide comprehensive training on disability rights for all justice system personnel to enhance their ability to effectively support persons with disabilities;**

(d) **Implement mandatory training for justice system actors to address prejudices and improve the credibility assessment of abuse claims made by persons with disabilities.**

#### **Liberty and security of person (art. 14)**

28. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The Mental Health Act (No. 846 of 2012) contains provisions that are not aligned with those of the Convention;

(b) The Persons with Disabilities Act lacks provisions to protect the liberty and security of persons with disabilities and prevent arbitrary deprivation of liberty based on impairment, and progress is slow in enacting the legislative instrument required by the Mental Health Act to protect the rights of persons with disabilities;

(c) Sociocultural practices continue to deprive persons with disabilities, particularly those with albinism and psychosocial disabilities, of their liberty and human rights, exacerbated by insufficient public awareness;

(d) There is no comprehensive system for collecting and maintaining disaggregated data on the deprivation of liberty of persons with disabilities.

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Revise section 58 of the Mental Health Act, which permits seclusion and restraint; sections 68–71, which allow for guardianship and substitute decision-making; and sections 42–53, which authorize involuntary admission and treatment, all of which contradict the Convention, and provide training for mental health professionals on the principles and provisions of the Convention and rights-based approaches to mental healthcare;**

(b) **Amend the Persons with Disability Act to include provisions that protect the liberty and security of persons with disabilities, prevent arbitrary deprivation of liberty for persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and expedite the progress towards enacting the legislative instrument required by the Mental Health Act to enhance the protection of their rights;**

(c) **Implement public awareness and educational and legal measures to address sociocultural practices that deprive persons with disabilities of their liberty and human rights;**

(d) **Establish a system for collecting and maintaining disaggregated data on the deprivation of liberty of persons with disabilities to effectively address and prevent these issues, ensuring informed policymaking and targeted interventions.**

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

30. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) Reports of alleged torture and ill-treatment faced by persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities in health facilities and psychiatric hospitals, in which they face deplorable conditions, such as chemical and mechanical restraints, as well as coercive

treatment. The Committee is also concerned that the Persons with Disability Act does not fully comply with article 15 of the Convention;

(b) The weak enforcement of existing anti-torture legislation;

(c) Children with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities still being segregated in institutions, in which they are subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and shackled for periods ranging from days and weeks to months and years.

**31. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Ensure that forced treatment on the grounds of disability is fully prohibited in law and in practice and amend the Persons with Disability Act to fully comply with article 15 of the Convention, ensuring robust protection against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment for all persons with disabilities in all settings;

(b) Improve the enforcement of existing anti-torture legislation by providing comprehensive training for law enforcement and judicial personnel on disability rights and the severe impacts of torture and ill-treatment; and implement strict penalties for violations to deter abuse and ensure accountability;

(c) Establish a national mechanism for the prevention of torture as required by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(d) Prevent ill-treatment of children and adults with disabilities who are still in institutions, including mental health facilities, amend the relevant legislation and the Social Protection Policy (2015) to incorporate provisions that provide for deinstitutionalization for persons with disabilities, and introduce foster families and community-based support.

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

**32. The Committee is concerned that:**

(a) The Domestic Violence Act (Act No. 732 of 2007) failed to adequately address the unique challenges that persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities, face;

(b) Laws and policies in the State party related to violence, including domestic violence, fail to address disability or albinism, accessible services and the need for trained personnel for women and girls with disabilities;

(c) Persons with disabilities who experience violence and abuse lack access to effective recovery services;

(d) There is a lack of specific programmes to protect children with disabilities, including children with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, with autism or with albinism, from discrimination, exclusion, violence, abuse, corporal punishment and neglect by teachers, peers and family members, violence at home, on the street or in institutions, including actions to prevent the use of derogatory language.

**33. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Review the national Gender Policy 2023–2032 to ensure that it explicitly addresses women and girls with disabilities, including those with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and those with albinism, that it prevents domestic violence, that it has mechanisms for women and girls with disabilities to file complaints and that such complaints are followed up, including through the provision of restorative justice for victims and sanctions for perpetrators;

(b) Remove barriers within the justice system, such as the requirement to pay for medical forms confirming abuse;

(c) Ensure that persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls who experience gender-based violence, have access to recovery services;

(d) Expedite the passage of amendments to the Children's Act (No. 560 of 1998) and the Juvenile Justice Act (No. 653 of 2003) to align them with the Convention to protect children with disabilities, including children with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities.

#### **Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)**

34. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The mistreatment received as a result of cultural and religious practices that consider persons with disabilities, especially persons with albinism, as a curse, resulting in their isolation, desertion and inhumane treatment, such as chaining and abuse in prayer camps;

(b) The existence of harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, that affect women and girls with disabilities.

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

(a) Effectively address female genital mutilation, both in law and in practice, including women and girls with disabilities. It also recommends that the State party take into account article 17 of the Convention while implementing target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Launch public education campaigns to change harmful cultural and religious beliefs about disabilities, particularly targeting the mistreatment of individuals with albinism and those with psychosocial disabilities, promote awareness of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities to prevent their inhumane treatment and protect them from exile, death threats and abuse in prayer camps.

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

36. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) There is high prevalence of institutionalization reported by the Ghana Statistical Service and the fact that many individuals still live in segregated environments, limiting their ability to live in the community in the absence of a national plan for the transition from institutional settings to live in the community;

(b) There are limited community-based support services to ensure that persons with disabilities can live independently and be included in the community;

(c) Persons with disabilities frequently face significant economic barriers, including unemployment and underemployment, which undermine their ability to live independently. Social stigmatization and discrimination further hinder their participation in community life, affecting their overall quality of life and independence;

(d) There is a lack of accessible and affordable housing, support services and social inclusion opportunities that has hindered efforts to promote community-based living for persons with disabilities, leaving them with no choice other than to live in institutions;

(e) Community-based services, including healthcare, education and employment services, and social support networks to support persons with disabilities are limited;

(f) The referral systems within communities are often underdeveloped, leading to inadequate coordination and follow-up for individuals who need comprehensive support services.

37. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Establish a national policy framework for the closure of institutions and residential care facilities, providing clear pathways and support for persons with disabilities to transition into the community;

(b) Develop and implement comprehensive community-based support services to ensure that persons with disabilities live independently and are included in the community;

- (c) **Implement policies to combat unemployment and underemployment among persons with disabilities, addressing social stigmatization and discrimination to enhance their economic independence and participation in community life;**
- (d) **Invest in accessible housing and robust support services to facilitate community-based living, ensuring persons with disabilities have access to inclusive education, employment opportunities and social inclusion initiatives;**
- (e) **Develop and expand community-based support services and inclusion initiatives, including in relation to housing, education and health services, to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community;**
- (f) **Enhance referral systems and coordination among healthcare, education, employment and social support networks to provide comprehensive community-based services for persons with disabilities.**

#### **Personal mobility (art. 20)**

38. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The inapplicability of tax exemptions for manufacturers of technical aids or appliances for use by persons with disabilities given the lack of regulations in relation to section 36 of the Persons with Disability Act and the lack of assistive technologies, including appliances and orthopaedic, prosthetic, optical and hearing aids, which are not covered by the national health insurance scheme;
- (b) The significant and increasing challenges faced by persons with disabilities in accessing quality and affordable mobility and assistive technologies, live assistance and intermediaries, especially in remote and rural areas, and the lack of orientation and mobility practitioners, as well as teachers, to train persons with disabilities on the use of their assistive technologies to enhance their dignity and respect in society;
- (c) The fact that the Convention on International Civil Aviation, which has provisions relating to persons with disabilities travelling by air, has not been ratified by the State party.

39. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Expedite the development and implementation of regulations in relation to section 36 of the Persons with Disability Act to ensure tax exemptions for manufacturers of technical aids and appliances are put into effect, amend the national health insurance scheme to explicitly require the provision of access to essential assistive devices and technology, in line with the Convention, and ensure these are affordable and accessible to all persons with disabilities;**
- (b) **Adopt measures to facilitate the acquisition of the necessary mobility and assistive technologies, live assistance and intermediaries, particularly for persons with physical and visual impairments, especially in remote and rural areas;**
- (c) **Adopt an effective national strategy for the training and retraining of orientation and mobility practitioners and teachers on the use of devices for persons with physical and visual impairments, particularly in remote and rural areas;**
- (d) **Ratify the Convention on International Civil Aviation and work with domestic air carriers to address insurance and aircraft design issues, ensuring that air travel is accessible to persons with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs.**

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

40. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees, among others, the right to freedom of speech and expression, thought, conscience and belief, and information for all persons is not enforced with regard to persons with disabilities as they continue to face barriers in accessing public information and communication, including information through television programmes, websites and other media services;

(b) The Right to Information Act (No. 989 of 2019) lacks provisions for persons with disabilities to seek and receive information in accessible formats in accordance with the Convention and there are gaps in providing information to and supporting the communication of persons with disabilities;

(c) Limited steps are being taken to officially recognize Ghanaian Sign Language in law and there is a lack, or an insufficient number, of trained and qualified sign language interpreters;

(d) Accessible communication methods, such as Braille, sign language and Easy Read formats, are not widely used or available, making it difficult for persons with disabilities to access essential services and information in the community.

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

(a) **Develop a comprehensive plan, with benchmarks, indicators and a timeline, to implement all aspects of article 21 of the Convention at all levels and to ensure that the information provided to the public, including on websites, television and in other media formats, is accessible to persons with disabilities, and establish a mechanism to monitor its implementation in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations;**

(b) **Review and amend the Right to Information Act to align it with the Convention and to ensure the accessibility of public communications and information to persons with different disabilities, and allocate sufficient funding for the development, promotion and use of accessible communication formats, such as Braille, deafblind interpretation, sign language, Easy Read, plain language, audio description, video transcription, captioning, and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication;**

(c) **Officially recognize Ghanaian Sign Language and take steps to provide training and certification for professional Ghanaian Sign Language interpreters;**

(d) **Develop and implement training programmes to increase the number of professionals who are proficient in the use of Braille, sign language and Easy Read to enhance communication to, and services for, persons with disabilities.**

**Respect for privacy (art. 22)**

42. The Committee is concerned that confidentiality and protection of the privacy of persons with disabilities is not fully ensured by existing legislation, including the Data Protection Act (No. 843 of 2012).

**43. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its legislation on data protection for persons with disabilities to ensure their privacy, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, including protection of information in their personal medical records in institutions and mental health systems and services.**

**Respect for home and the family (art. 23)**

44. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Persons with disabilities, particularly persons with albinism and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, face challenges in exercising their rights to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships, due to stereotypes and stigma about them;

(b) Parents with disabilities do not have adequate support to exercise their parental rights and parents of children with disabilities face barriers, such as discrimination by association, isolation, lack of societal support and economic challenges;

(c) There is lack of promotion of inclusive alternative care in family-based, rather than institutional, settings for children with disabilities who lack parental care.

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

- (a) **Develop and implement targeted awareness-raising campaigns to combat cultural and religious misconceptions, myths and stereotypes about marriage, family, parenthood and the relationships of persons with disabilities, particularly persons with albinism, and promote the rights, inclusivity of and respect for the choices and preferences of persons with disabilities;**
- (b) **In close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, establish comprehensive support programmes with adequate resources for parents with disabilities and parents with children with disabilities to ensure that the parents exercise their full parental rights and to provide them with early and comprehensive information, and support services, ensuring that they are safeguarded against stigma, abuse and discrimination on the basis of disability;**
- (c) **Establish a robust system to address violations of the rights of children with disabilities throughout the country in all settings.**

#### **Education (art. 24)**

46. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) Delays in implementing the revised Inclusive Education Policy (2024), as well as a comprehensive implementation plan, a communication and resource mobilization strategy, a monitoring and evaluation framework, and relevant standards and guidelines, resulting in deferment of improvements to inclusive education;
- (b) The continuation of segregated special education for children with disabilities, particularly children who are blind, deaf or deafblind, children with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and those who require more intensive support, despite legislative and policy commitments to inclusive education;
- (c) The report indicating that schools deny admission to some children with disabilities, particularly those with Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy and those who need extensive support, due to a lack of accessible physical facilities, resources and reasonable accommodation to support inclusive education;
- (d) Inadequate budgetary allocations for the promotion and implementation of inclusive education and the absence of systematic data collection, disaggregated by sex and type of impairment, on the number of students with disabilities enrolled in the education system and those who are out of education;
- (e) Limited accessible materials and adaptive learning environments, and the lack of sign language, alternative and augmentative modes and methods of communication and individualized accommodation for students with disabilities at all levels, especially those in rural areas, as well as the lack of accessible school transport;
- (f) Insufficient training for teachers and non-teaching staff on the right to inclusive education, proficiency in Braille and sign language and accessible modes of teaching;
- (g) Challenges faced, during secondary education, by students with visual impairments and their teachers in, respectively, learning and teaching science and mathematics.

47. **Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee urges the State party:**

- (a) **To accelerate the launch of the implementation of the revised Inclusive Education Policy, as well as a comprehensive implementation plan, a communication and resource mobilization strategy, a monitoring and evaluation framework, and relevant standards and guidelines, to facilitate acceleration towards inclusive education and ensure meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Policy;**

(b) To develop and implement an action plan with a time frame for the transition from segregated education to quality inclusive education, providing adequate budgetary allocations, and technical and personal resources to ensure that all students with disabilities are provided with reasonable accommodation and individualized support at all levels of education;

(c) To ensure access to regular schools for all children with disabilities, providing the schools with the facilities necessary to ensure that they do not deny the admission of children with disabilities on the basis of a lack of necessary facilities;

(d) To guarantee the allocation of appropriate resources for the promotion and implementation of inclusive education and the collection of systematic statistical data, disaggregated by sex and type of impairment, including the number and percentage of children with disabilities who are not in the education system;

(e) To provide students with disabilities with learning support based on individual requirements, including classroom support and accessible learning environments, teaching methods and learning materials in alternative and accessible formats, such as inclusive digital access, and other modes and means of communication, including Easy Read, communication aids and assistive and information technology, make sure that there are enough teachers proficient in Ghanaian Sign Language, especially in rural and remote areas, and ensure the accessibility of school transport and the physical environment across the education system;

(f) To ensure continuous training of regular education teachers in sign language, Braille, Easy Read and other accessible modes of teaching in mainstream schools and raise the awareness of other members of the school community on inclusive education and the human rights model of disability;

(g) To provide appropriate teacher training, and adopt methods and adapt the curriculum, including the use of tactile and audiovisual learning tools, to address the challenges in the learning and teaching of science and mathematics encountered, respectively, by students with visual impairments and their teachers.

## Health (art. 25)

48. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) Information that most of the health facilities, institutions and equipment are physically inaccessible and information on health services is also not available in accessible formats, in particular sign language, and other modes of communication;

(b) The stigma and discriminatory attitudes towards disability, gender and sexuality that negatively affect how women with disabilities exercise their rights to sexual and reproductive health services and family planning;

(c) The low levels of registration of persons with disabilities in the national health insurance scheme, the fact that most essential medicines for persons with disabilities are still not covered by it and the absence of a comprehensive strategy to train health professionals in the human rights model of disability;

(d) The lack of a reproductive health policy and standards to combat discrimination against women with disabilities who decide to have children and of measures to prevent forced contraception in adolescents with disabilities.

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

(a) Ensure accessibility in health facilities in urban and rural areas by ensuring modification of infrastructure;

(b) Address stigma and discriminatory attitudes affecting women with disabilities by training health personnel on disability rights and inclusivity, and improve the accessibility of health facilities and information on sexual and reproductive health services to ensure equitable access for women and girls with disabilities;

(c) Increase the registration of persons with disabilities in the national health insurance scheme, expand coverage of essential medicines for persons with disabilities under the scheme, develop training for healthcare professionals on the rights of persons with disabilities, support measures and information and communication means and methods, and provide health information in accessible formats, including Braille, sign language and Easy Read, for persons with disabilities, particularly persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and women and girls with disabilities;

(d) Establish a reproductive health policy and standards that would ensure accessibility, availability and quality sexual and reproductive health services for all women and girls with disabilities, including disability training for reproductive healthcare providers, eliminate practices that discriminate against women with disabilities, including women and girls with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and women and girls with albinism in taking decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and monitor and report on the implementation of the policy and any violation of these rights.

#### **Habilitation and rehabilitation (art. 26)**

50. The Committee notes with concern that there are only nine public rehabilitation centres across the State party and that there is limited involvement of non-governmental organizations in community-based rehabilitation.

51. **The Committee recommends that the State party expand habilitation and rehabilitation systems, including by encouraging non-governmental organizations to provide community-based rehabilitation and take the measures necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities in rural areas, have access to rehabilitation services.**

#### **Work and employment (art. 27)**

52. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The rates of job placement among persons with disabilities remain low despite certain legislation, policies and initiatives to support the employment of persons with disabilities, such as article 29 (7) of the Constitution and sections 9–13 of the Persons with Disability Act, in addition to sections 45–53 of the Labour Act (No. 651 of 2003);

(b) The Persons with Disability Act does not recognize the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination in the workplace, and the principle of equal pay for equal work for persons with disabilities, including in the private sector, does not exist;

(c) There is a lack of access to education and appropriate vocational and technical skills training and there is also a lack of awareness among employers, which contributes to the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the open labour market;

(d) The employment centre for persons with disabilities and the employment equity policy advocated by organizations of persons with disabilities have yet to be established;

(e) Statistics on persons with disabilities employed in the private and public sectors are not kept and therefore not available to help assess progress or the lack thereof;

(f) Affirmative actions to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the labour market do not exist.

53. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Take effective and affirmative measures to ensure the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, including by introducing and supporting the mechanisms outlined in article 29 (7) of the Constitution and the Persons with Disability Act, to encourage businesses to hire and retain persons with disabilities;

(b) Explicitly recognize in law and policy the denial of reasonable accommodation as workplace discrimination so that persons with disabilities can have access to decent employment opportunities and equal pay for equal work;

(c) Create and implement targeted market-oriented technical vocational education and training programmes for persons with disabilities and raise awareness among employers to foster inclusive work environments and combat negative stereotypes;

(d) Establish an employment centre for persons with disabilities and adopt an employment equity policy, as proposed by organizations of persons with disabilities, to enhance the employment of persons with disabilities and ensure organizations of persons with disabilities actively participate in its formulation and implementation;

(e) Collect and disseminate data on the employment of persons with disabilities in the public, private and informal sectors, disaggregated by gender, profession, level of employment and geographical location;

(f) Establish affirmative action measures to stimulate greater employment of persons with disabilities, especially for women with disabilities.

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

54. The Committee notes with concern the high number of persons with disabilities living in poverty and the absence of a comprehensive social protection system guaranteeing access to an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities, including resources to cover disability-related expenses.

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

(a) Develop social protection and poverty reduction legislation, policies and strategies targeting persons with disabilities;

(b) Adopt a universal social protection scheme, including subsidies or allowances to cover disability-related costs, to ensure an adequate standard of living for all persons with disabilities who do not have other sources of income, including those with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, address stigma and enhance understanding of their unique needs;

(c) Include persons with disabilities in programmes designed to promote an adequate standard of living, including programmes and initiatives to increase access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation, including in rural and remote areas;

(d) Simplify application processes, enhance outreach efforts and provide comprehensive guidance to increase awareness and access to the 3 per cent allocation from the District Assembly Common Fund for persons with disabilities.

#### **Participation in political and public life (art. 29)**

56. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Articles 42 and 94 (2) (b) (ii) of the Constitution exclude persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities from voting, registering to vote or standing to be a Member of Parliament;

(b) There is a lack of voting locations, political platforms and public offices that are physically accessible to persons with disabilities;

(c) Information on the requirements for persons with disabilities to register to vote in different voting stations is not made available to electoral officers ahead of time;

(d) There is a low level of involvement among persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, in representational politics;

(e) There is limited awareness among political parties and the public about the rights of persons with disabilities and hence the representation of persons with disabilities in political positions is particularly low.

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

- (a) **Review and amend the Constitution and other discriminatory legal frameworks that hinder the political participation of persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;**
- (b) **Carry out accessibility audits and ensure the physical accessibility of all voting locations, political platforms and public offices for voters with disabilities;**
- (c) **Develop or reinforce, in a manner compatible with the right to privacy, a voter registration database that includes voters with disabilities, disaggregated by sex, age and impairment, and share the information with election officers prior to voting to enable them to prepare and ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities, while ensuring confidentiality and respect for the privacy of persons with disabilities;**
- (d) **Encourage the active participation of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, in representational politics;**
- (e) **Raise awareness among political parties and the public about the rights and contributions of persons with disabilities, in order to increase representation in elected positions and significant public roles.**

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

58. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) **The Copyright Act is not aligned with the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled;**
- (b) **Most sports and cultural facilities, museums, cultural and recreational centres, tourist attractions, stadiums and public libraries, including in rural and remote areas, are inaccessible to persons with disabilities;**
- (c) **Persons with disabilities, particularly persons with albinism, face significant cultural barriers and negative stereotypes as they are subjected to discrimination, rejection and social exclusion, which prevents them from participating in traditional cultural events and community activities.**

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

- (a) **Amend the Copyright Act to make it consistent with the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled, as soon as possible;**
- (b) **Implement a comprehensive accessibility audit of all sport facilities, cultural facilities, museums, recreational centres, tourist attractions, stadiums and public libraries across the country to identify barriers, prioritize the installation of ramps, accessible seating and proper signage, allocate sufficient funding and resources, enhance political commitment and conduct awareness-raising campaigns to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, in leisure and cultural activities and sports;**
- (c) **Launch targeted public awareness programmes to challenge cultural stereotypes and discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities, particularly those with albinism, and foster inclusive community engagement and participation in traditional cultural events and activities, ensuring that all individuals can freely and actively take part without facing social exclusion or prejudice.**

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

### Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

60. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of systematic collection of disaggregated statistics on persons with disabilities by ministries, departments and agencies to assist in the correct development of public policies;

(b) The fact that the data collected through the National Census of 2021, through the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning, were not inclusive as they took no account of persons with albinism, persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with autism and children with disabilities below the age of 5 years;

(c) The lack of accurate and disaggregated data on persons with disabilities as required by the Data Protection Act.

61. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **In close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, review data-collection processes among ministries, departments and agencies to make them disability inclusive and connect them with the Ghana Statistical Service to increase the availability of inclusive data and ensure that the data collected are disseminated to the general population and to organizations of persons with disabilities and serve as a basis for policies and programmes thereby ensuring that they are inclusive of all persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Review the data-collection methodology at the national level and ensure that all persons with disabilities are included and that data are disaggregated by gender, age, type of impairment, demographic distribution and other necessary attributes;**

(c) **Review the Data Protection Act, to include questions on persons with disabilities disaggregated by gender, age, type of disability and other necessary attributes.**

### International cooperation (art. 32)

62. The Committee is concerned about the lack of mainstreaming of disability rights into the national implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also notes with concern that organizations of persons with disabilities are neither fully consulted nor involved in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, nor are they consulted on anything related to international cooperation.

63. **The Committee recommends that the State party mainstream disability rights into the national implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, and that those processes, and anything related to international cooperation programmes, be carried out in close consultation with and with the active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities.**

### National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

64. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The National Council on Persons with Disability, which is the designated focal point for the implementation of the Convention, is underresourced and not decentralized, making it difficult for it to carry out this mandate;

(b) The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, which has been monitoring the state of human rights across the country to ensure State compliance with its treaty obligations, is underresourced.

65. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Provide adequate resources and strengthen the capacity of the National Council on Persons with Disability, as the State party's focal point to implement the Convention;

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

#### **D. Cooperation and technical assistance (art. 37)**

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

### **IV. Follow-up**

#### **Dissemination of information**

67. The Committee emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. With regard to urgent measures that must be taken, the Committee would like to draw the State party's attention to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 11, on equality and non-discrimination, and 25, on equal recognition before the law.

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

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

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

#### **Next periodic report**

71. Under the simplified reporting procedure, the Committee will transmit to the State party a list of issues prior to reporting at least one year prior to 31 August 2030, the date by which the State party's combined second to fifth periodic reports are due. The replies of the State party to that list of issues will constitute its combined second to fifth periodic reports. The State party may opt out of the simplified reporting procedure within one year of the Committee's adoption of the present concluding observations.

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