



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General  
8 May 2026

Original: English

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## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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

#### I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Pakistan<sup>1</sup> at its 822nd meeting,<sup>2</sup> held on 11 March 2026. It adopted the following concluding observations at its 841st and 843rd meetings, held on 25 and 26 March 2026.
2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of Pakistan, 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 presence of representatives of the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva during the constructive dialogue, and the written replies submitted by the State Party following the dialogue. However, it regrets that the official delegation of the State Party notified the secretariat of the Committee at short notice about their inability to attend the Committee's thirty-fourth session.

#### II. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State Party to implement the Convention at the federal and provincial levels since ratification in 2011, including the following:
  - (a) The enactment of federal and provincial laws on the rights of persons with disabilities, including the Islamabad Capital Territory Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2020, the Punjab Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2022, the Punjab Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Monitoring and Enforcement Regulations, 2025, the Sindh Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2018, the Balochistan Persons with Disabilities Act, 2017, and the Balochistan Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2025;
  - (b) The enactment of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2026, expressly recognizing women with disabilities as aggrieved persons who may be vulnerable to domestic violence and affirming their entitlement to protection and remedies under the law;
  - (c) The adoption in 2021 by the Higher Education Commission of the Policy for Students with Disabilities at Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan;

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

<sup>1</sup> [CRPD/C/PAK/1](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [CRPD/C/SR.822](#).

<sup>3</sup> [CRPD/C/PAK/RQ/1](#).

<sup>4</sup> [CRPD/C/PAK/Q/1](#).



- (d) The revision in 2020 of the National Action Plan on Human Rights, including a dedicated component on the rights of persons with disabilities;
- (e) The establishment of federal, provincial and local focal points to monitor the implementation of the laws on the rights of persons with disabilities, including the Islamabad Capital Territory Council on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the provincial councils and the district welfare and rehabilitation units;
- (f) The issuance of judicial rulings that uphold the principle of non-discrimination and promote the rights of persons with disabilities, at both the federal and the provincial level.<sup>5</sup>

### III. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

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

5. The Committee recognizes the legislative reform on the rights of persons with disabilities following the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment, in 2010. Nevertheless, it is concerned about:

- (a) The delay in the adoption of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Bill, which remains under consideration of the provincial cabinet;
- (b) The prevalence of the medical model in defining and assessing disability, as reflected in the exclusive authority granted to medical assessment boards to determine eligibility for the disability certificate and related identification documents at the provincial level, including the Himmat Card in Punjab;
- (c) The limited information available on the national strategy to protect the rights of persons with disabilities being developed by the Ministry of Human Rights, including on its objectives and targets, and on plans for consultation with persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations;
- (d) The insufficient coordination between the federal and provincial levels and among provinces, resulting in fragmented implementation of the Convention and disparities in the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities across the State Party, including conceptual and substantive disparities among provincial laws;
- (e) The limited mandate of the Islamabad Capital Territory Council on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and of the provincial councils, which focus primarily on coordinating the implementation of legislation on the rights of persons with disabilities;
- (f) The lack of concrete mechanisms to ensure the full involvement and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and persons with disabilities living in rural areas, through their representative organizations, in the development, implementation and monitoring of legislation, policies and other matters that affect them;
- (g) The absence of a plan to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

**6. Recalling its general comment No. 7 (2018) on the participation of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) Expedite the adoption of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Bill and ensure its full alignment with the Convention;**

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<sup>5</sup> CRPD/C/PAK/RQ/1, paras. 8 and 10.

(b) **Adopt the human rights model of disability in defining and assessing disability, including through the use of multidisciplinary teams who are capable of identifying the impact of environmental obstacles and attitudinal barriers that hinder the exercise by persons with disabilities of their rights and fundamental freedoms;**

(c) **Ensure the prompt adoption and implementation of the national strategy to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, with clear objectives, targets, indicators and timelines;**

(d) **Establish effective federal and interprovincial coordination mechanisms to ensure a reasonable level of harmonization of the laws and policies adopted in the various provinces, in line with the Convention;**

(e) **Expand the mandate of, and provide adequate resources to, the National Council on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the federal level, and to the provincial councils, to enable them to play an effective role in the decision-making process;**

(f) **Establish accessible mechanisms to guarantee the full involvement and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and persons with disabilities in rural areas, through their representative organizations, in the development, implementation and monitoring of legislation and policies that affect them;**

(g) **Consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention without delay.**

## **B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)**

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

7. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The absence of a plan to review legislation and policies with a view to abolishing all forms of direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of disability, including discrimination against persons affected by leprosy;

(b) The lack of a comprehensive definition of disability-based discrimination in some provincial laws, and the failure to recognize the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of such discrimination;

(c) The use of derogatory language in federal and provincial laws, in particular regarding psychosocial disability, namely in articles 51 (2) (d) and 63 (1) (a) of the Constitution, in article 12 of the Contract Act, 1872, in section 84 of the Penal Code, in order XXXII of the Code of Civil Procedure and in the Mental Health Ordinance, 2001;

(d) The insufficient measures taken to prevent and address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;

(e) The lack of inclusive, fully accessible and effective complaint mechanisms at the federal and provincial levels for disability-based discrimination.

8. **Recalling its general comment No. 6 (2018) on equality and non-discrimination and targets 10.2 and 10.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Take measures to ensure that all its legislation concerning persons with disabilities includes a clear definition of direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of disability, and recognize the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination;**

(b) **Conduct a comprehensive legislative and policy review at both the federal and the provincial levels to abolish derogatory language and discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities;**

(c) **Take measures at both the federal and the provincial levels to prevent and address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;**

(d) **Establish inclusive, accessible and effective complaint mechanisms, including judicial and administrative procedures, for victims of disability-based discrimination, provide them with comprehensive redress and sanction the perpetrators.**

#### **Women with disabilities (art. 6)**

9. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of awareness among the general public and public officials of the rights of women and girls with disabilities, particularly in rural areas;

(b) The absence of a disability perspective in Pakistan Vision 2025 and in the National Policy for the Development and Empowerment of Women, which was formulated in 2002 to eliminate discrimination against women and enhance their potential;

(c) The lack of effective participation of women with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in decision-making processes, in particular in developing and implementing the National Gender Policy Framework, launched by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives in 2022.

10. **The Committee, recalling its general comment No. 3 (2016) on women and girls with disabilities and targets 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Raise awareness among families, the general public and public officials of the rights of women and girls with disabilities, and of the obligation to enhance their empowerment and social inclusion in both urban and rural areas;**

(b) **Incorporate a disability perspective into all policies and strategies related to the protection of women's rights, in order to combat discrimination on the basis of gender and disability and to address the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities in both urban and rural areas;**

(c) **Ensure the full, effective and meaningful participation of women with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in all decision-making processes relating to gender equality and the rights of the persons with disabilities.**

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

11. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The limited information available on the situation of children with disabilities, particularly those who are institutionalized or living in poverty or in rural or remote areas, and on the steps taken to protect their rights and facilitate their remaining with or return to their families or foster families;

(b) The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, which sets the minimum age of marriage for girls at 16, and the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, which provides for exceptions to the minimum age of marriage and allows child marriage, including among children with disabilities, in particular in provinces that have not revised their child marriage restraint acts;

(c) The insufficient involvement of children with disabilities in the development of policies and programmes that affect them.

12. **With reference to its joint statement, with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, on the rights of children with disabilities (2022), the Committee urges the State Party:**

(a) **To systematically gather disaggregated data on the situation of children with disabilities, and take steps to prevent their abandonment, abuse and institutionalization;**

(b) **To mainstream a disability perspective into the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act, 2016, which criminalizes exposure of minors to grooming, child pornography, cruelty to minors, trafficking in persons, sexual abuse and domestic violence, and into the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act, 2004;**

(c) **To amend the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, to abolish any exceptions permitting child marriage, and facilitate the amendment of child marriage restraint acts in the provinces to set the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for both sexes;**

(d) **To establish spaces for children with disabilities to express their views on matters that concern them and ensure that these views are taken into account in the development of strategies, plans and programmes for their empowerment and social inclusion.**

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

13. The Committee is concerned about the absence of systematic awareness-raising campaigns targeting the general public, families of persons with disabilities and public officials to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities and the need for their social inclusion are understood and respected, particularly with regard to women and children with disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities.

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

(a) **Adopt a comprehensive national awareness-raising strategy and consistently promote an image of respect for persons with disabilities, through public campaigns, continuous education in schools at all levels and radio and television programmes, to combat stigmatization of and stereotypes concerning persons with disabilities, including persons affected by leprosy;**

(b) **Promote awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities among public officials at all levels, including those in the judiciary, law enforcement, health and education sectors, through the development and mandatory implementation of training programmes.**

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

15. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Although some limited plans exist with regard to accessibility, they focus primarily on persons with physical disabilities and have not been effectively implemented; consequently, most of the State Party's infrastructure, including public transportation, is inaccessible to persons with disabilities, including persons with sensory disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, with respect to both physical and digital matters;

(b) There is no comprehensive federal plan on accessibility to guide action by public or private entities in the construction of new facilities and the modification of existing ones; consequently, accessibility is not a prerequisite for the provision of services in the State Party.

16. **Recalling its general comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility and Goal 9 and targets 11.2 and 11.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Develop and implement a national plan on accessibility that requires compliance with international standards and includes specific timelines, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, including non-compliance penalties, with a view to ensuring the accessibility of, inter alia, buildings, transportation, information and communications, including information and communications technology, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public in both urban and rural areas throughout the State Party;**

(b) **Ensure that accessibility is a prerequisite for the issuance of licences for the provision of public goods or services.**

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

17. The Committee is deeply concerned about:

(a) The fact that the Penal Code allows the imposition of the death penalty for a number of crimes, and penalties that could lead to or cause death for *qisa* (retaliation) offences;

(b) The lack of safeguards to protect persons with disabilities from discriminatory practices that may threaten their lives, including the absence of safeguards to ensure free access to healthcare, particularly in rural areas.

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

(a) **Abolish the death penalty in federal and provincial laws, updating the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code to include the safeguards established by the Supreme Court, and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;**

(b) **Take immediate steps to ensure full and free access to health services for persons with disabilities, in particular in rural areas, care centres and places of detention.**

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

19. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) More than 2 million persons with disabilities were affected by the floods in 2022 and 2025, yet detailed information about the measures taken and services provided to support them is very limited;

(b) There was a lack of accessible emergency information, including accessible alerts, alarms and instructions by public authorities, during the 2022 and 2025 floods;

(c) The National Disaster Management Act, 2010, and the National Disaster Response Plan are not disability-inclusive and lack sufficient provisions to ensure full protection for persons with disabilities in risk situations and during natural disasters.

20. **Recalling its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **In close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, develop and implement without delay all appropriate measures to make the emergency services, including access to emergency information, fully accessible to persons with disabilities throughout the country;**

(b) **Ensure the full and effective representation and participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the federal and provincial mechanisms on disaster prevention and mitigation, including the Emergency Relief Cell, the National Crisis Management Cell, the National Council for Disaster Management, the National Disaster Management Authority and the district disaster management committees.**

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

21. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Provisions in the Contract Act, 1872, and in Order XXXII of the Code of Civil Procedure fully or partially deprive persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities of their right to exercise their legal capacity;

(b) These provisions deny persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, their right to exercise their capacity to enter into contracts, conduct all types of banking transactions and exercise their right to family life and to marry, and restrict their right to inheritance;

(c) The lack of measures to replace substitute decision-making systems with supported decision-making systems that respect the autonomy, rights, will and preferences of persons with disabilities in all areas of life.

22. **Recalling its general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law, 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) **Abolish all legal provisions and eliminate all practices that deprive persons with disabilities of their right to exercise their legal capacity on an equal basis with others;**

(b) **Develop and implement supported decision-making mechanisms to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise their legal capacity fully and independently.**

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

23. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of accessibility of federal and provincial courts, adjudicatory entities and police stations;

(b) The limited accessibility and reasonable accommodation in places of detention;

(c) The limited individual procedural and administrative accommodation provided for persons with disabilities in the justice system;

(d) The insufficient knowledge, training and awareness among legal aid lawyers, police officers and members of the judiciary with regard to working with and representing persons with disabilities.

24. **The Committee recalls the International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities and target 16.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals and recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Develop, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, national and provincial action plans, with clear time frames, to make courts, police stations and all justice premises fully accessible to persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Ensure that all places of detention are accessible to persons with disabilities and that reasonable accommodation is systematically provided;**

(c) **Ensure the provision of procedural and age-appropriate accommodation in all administrative and judicial proceedings, including through the delivery of support**

**services and free legal aid, to enable persons with disabilities to participate effectively in the justice system, including as judges, legal advisers and witnesses;**

**(d) Strengthen capacity-building programmes for the judiciary and justice-sector professionals, such as prosecutors and law enforcement officials, including police officers and prison personnel, on the provisions of the Convention and on access to justice for persons with disabilities, including on procedural accommodation for persons with disabilities.**

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

25. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of plans to reform the Mental Health Ordinance, 2001, which permits the forced institutionalization of persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and uses inappropriate terms, such as “mentally retarded”, to refer to persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;

(b) The lack of accessibility in places of deprivation of liberty, including those for persons subject to criminal proceedings;

(c) The lack of information on the number of persons with disabilities who are still in institutions.

26. **Recalling its general comment No. 1 (2014), its guidelines on the right to liberty and security of persons with disabilities and its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

**(a) Take immediate measures to amend the Mental Health Ordinance, 2001, to bring it into line with the Convention, ensuring that derogatory language is removed, and that it explicitly prohibits involuntary institutionalization, and ensure that complaint mechanisms are in place in this regard;**

**(b) Train healthcare personnel, police officers and prison staff on the rights of persons with disabilities and on the prohibition of detention without consent on the basis of disability;**

**(c) Adopt an accessibility plan for all centres of deprivation of liberty for persons subject to criminal proceedings, and provide health and rehabilitation services and professional and vocational training for persons with disabilities;**

**(d) Collect, analyse and disseminate disaggregated data on persons with disabilities living in institutional settings.**

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

27. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Despite the existence of legislative safeguards, including the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022, cases of torture and ill-treatment against persons with disabilities, particularly persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, continue to occur in custodial settings;

(b) There is no information available regarding monitoring and evaluation visits conducted at places of segregation to detect and prevent cases of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of persons with disabilities;

(c) The National Commission on the Status of Women, in its efforts to prevent abuse and harassment, has no cross-cutting measures in place for women and girls with disabilities who face violence, including domestic violence;

(d) There are no plans to conduct a nationwide assessment of or investigation into the use of restrictive practices against children and youth with disabilities in mainstream and special education schools, hospitals, shelters and any other public institutions.

28. **Recalling its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, 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) **Ensure the effective implementation of the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022;**

(b) **While deinstitutionalization processes are being established, implement programmes for the supervision and regular monitoring of mental health facilities and prisons to detect and prevent cases of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment of persons with disabilities, and ensure that such facilities and prisons have mechanisms in place for filing complaints, ensuring follow-up, providing compensation and reparation to victims and conducting prompt, impartial and effective investigations and prosecution of perpetrators;**

(c) **Take measures to ensure that the National Commission on the Status of Women, services providing assistance to women who are victims of violence or other types of abuse and all other agencies, programmes and strategies for the protection of women from abuse are reformed to incorporate disability and gender perspectives into their activities;**

(d) **Undertake a comprehensive nationwide assessment of the use of restrictive practices against children and youth with disabilities across all settings, including education, health and care institutions, with a view to identifying, preventing and eliminating such practices;**

(e) **Ensure that shelters for women and girls who are victims of abuse and domestic violence are accessible, both physically and in terms of information and communications, and that they have staff members who are trained in and sensitive to the needs of all persons of disabilities.**

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

29. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The police gender strategy, designed to guide police conduct towards women in cases of gender-based violence, has not been developed in a cross-cutting manner that takes into account women and girls with disabilities;

(b) The women's helpline in Punjab (1043) is not accessible to deaf persons or persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and it is unclear whether it operates 24 hours a day;

(c) The various strategies established under the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018, are not inclusive of persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities;

(d) There are cases of exploitation of children with disabilities through forced begging;

(e) Women and girls with disabilities face heightened risks of gender-based violence.

30. **Recalling its statement of 25 November 2021 on the elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities, and targets 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure that all police strategies, hotlines and any other forms of support mechanisms for the prevention of exploitation, violence and abuse are inclusive of persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and that they are fully accessible;**

(b) **Investigate and report on the number of persons with disabilities who are being subjected to trafficking in persons, establishing clear mechanisms for them to file complaints regarding this crime, ensuring follow-up, providing redress and punishing the perpetrators;**

(c) **Take effective measures to ensure that children with disabilities are adequately protected from exploitation, violence and abuse, including exploitation through forced begging;**

(d) **Take measures to prevent and combat all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities.**

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

31. The Committee is concerned that women and girls with disabilities continue to be subjected to forced sterilization and abortion.

32. **The Committee urges the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, to take necessary steps to abolish the practice of subjecting women and girls with disabilities to forced sterilization and abortion. It further recommends that the State Party take measures to ensure effective prevention, investigation and accountability for such practices, including the training of judges and prosecutors on the rights of persons with disabilities and the international obligations of the State Party, in particular with regard to non-discrimination on grounds of disability and respect for the integrity of persons with disabilities, especially children and women with disabilities.**

#### **Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)**

33. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) There are cases of children with disabilities who are not registered at birth, and persons with disabilities in rural and remote areas face difficulties in completing administrative procedures for disability certificates locally, forcing them to travel and spend additional time and money to register;

(b) There are reported cases of Afghan nationals with disabilities being arbitrarily deported.

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

(a) **Establish home-based monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to ensure that all children with disabilities are registered at birth;**

(b) **Ensure the availability of local offices of the National Database Registration Authority to facilitate administrative procedures for persons with disabilities to obtain disability certificate in their own communities;**

(c) **Ensure full access to services for refugees with disabilities and prevent their arbitrary or forced deportation.**

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

35. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The transition of persons with disabilities from living in institutions to living in the community has not begun;

(b) There is a lack of support services for persons with disabilities to live independently.

36. **Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with**

disabilities on the transformation of services for persons with disabilities,<sup>6</sup> 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) Adopt and implement a comprehensive national plan for the deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities, with specific timelines and sufficient resources for its implementation at the federal and provincial levels;

(b) Ensure the availability of inclusive community-based services for persons with disabilities, and develop and make available at all levels, including in urban and rural areas, the support services required by persons with disabilities, including personal assistance, to enable them to choose their place of residence and to live independently;

(c) Take targeted measures for the deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities, including by developing community-based services and providing support to families, especially households headed by single mothers, in order to ensure the right of children with disabilities to grow up in a family environment and to enjoy family life.

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

37. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Many persons with disabilities in rural areas, especially those with low incomes, including persons affected by leprosy, are confined to their homes owing to a lack of access to mobility aids;

(b) Despite the existence of the Assistive Technology Programme, persons with disabilities, especially those living in poverty and those living in rural and remote areas, continue to face barriers to obtaining mobility assistance.

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

(a) **Ensure that there are programmes in place to train personnel involved in the production of mobility and transportation aids;**

(b) **Ensure that mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies provided through the existing Assistive Technology Programme reach all persons with disabilities, with special attention to those living in poverty, those living in rural and remote areas and those affected by leprosy;**

(c) **Enhance the provision of communication aids for deaf persons.**

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

39. The Committee is concerned about the limited progress made to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to information, using accessible modes, means and formats of communication, and the lack of allocation of resources.

40. **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 appropriate measures to ensure compliance with the Freedom of Information Ordinance, 2002, so that information and communications provided by ministries, local governments, courts, tribunals and hospitals are accessible to all persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Ensure mandatory requirements for news and other television programmes to provide sign language interpretation or captioning for deaf persons;**

<sup>6</sup> [A/HRC/52/32](#).

(c) **Establish a programme for the training and professional certification of sign language interpreters, in consultation with the deaf community, and ensure the availability of sign language interpreters in judicial, health and educational services;**

(d) **Take steps to involve deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in the development of policies that affect them, including the process of reviewing the Access to Media (Deaf) Persons Act, 2022;**

(e) **Ensure that the websites of all ministries and services are accessible to all persons with disabilities.**

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

41. The Committee expresses its concern about:

(a) The persistence of social stigmatization that results in restriction of the right of persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities, to marriage, especially in rural areas;

(b) The discriminatory provisions in the marriage and family laws, including the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890, under which parents with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities are deprived of their right to custody;

(c) The lack of access to sexual and reproductive health, maternity, motherhood and childhood services.

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

(a) **Review and abolish all discriminatory provisions in the marriage and family laws, at the federal and provincial levels, that restrict or deprive persons with disabilities of their rights to marriage and parenthood;**

(b) **Develop and implement, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, awareness-raising and educational campaigns to combat social stigmatization and promote the right of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, to marriage and parenthood;**

(c) **Develop federal and provincial action plans, with clear time frames, to make sexual and reproductive health services and related services accessible to persons with disabilities, including in rural areas.**

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

43. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) High non-enrolment and dropout rates persist among children with disabilities;

(b) The Government provides a wide range of services for special education, rather than for inclusive education;

(c) The number of persons with disabilities accepted into inclusive education is very limited;

(d) The Government urges that children with disabilities, including those affected by leprosy, be enrolled in private or special schools, despite the Government's obligation to provide inclusive education.

44. **Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, in particular learners with disabilities and their families, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Take all measures necessary to increase enrolment and retention of persons with disabilities in schools;**

(b) **In accordance with the Islamabad Declaration on Inclusive Education (2005), adopt a national plan to transform the education system so that it provides inclusive and quality education for all persons with disabilities at all levels, including in computer science and information technology, in both urban and rural areas, and prohibits discrimination on grounds of disability;**

(c) **Guarantee observance of the right to inclusive education through the adoption of a non-rejection policy at public schools, and redouble efforts to enrol all persons with disabilities, in particular children with disabilities, including those requiring more intensive support, in rural and remote areas;**

(d) **Ensure the accessibility of environments, provide reasonable accommodation and furnish pedagogical materials and techniques that are accessible to students with disabilities, including Braille, Pakistan sign language and closed captioning;**

(e) **Make inclusive education and the rights of all persons with disabilities key components of teacher training from the outset and compulsory in the training of instructors before and during the exercise of their functions.**

#### **Health (art. 25)**

45. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Services provided through the public health system remain underresourced and overstretched, resulting in long waiting lists and therefore increased inaccessibility to persons with disabilities, who bear a disproportionate burden of undiagnosed or poorly managed health conditions;

(b) The training of healthcare personnel on the rights of persons with disabilities is insufficient;

(c) The right of persons with disabilities to respect for their free and informed consent in healthcare, including in sexual and reproductive health services and psychiatric interventions, is not adequately ensured;

(d) Disability and gender perspectives are not systematically mainstreamed into all health programmes, such as the Lady Health Workers Programme, the health protection programme for marginalized persons and the People's Primary Healthcare Initiative;

(e) Gaps persist in the availability and accessibility of community-based mental health services, particularly in rural and remote areas.

46. **Recalling targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Take steps to ensure the accessibility of all healthcare services, both in terms of information and communications and in terms of physical facilities, equipment and furniture;**

(b) **Ensure that mandatory training programmes are established for healthcare personnel on the rights, dignity, autonomy and needs of persons with disabilities, including the right of all persons with disabilities to respect for their free and informed consent and to appropriate treatment, taking into account disability and gender perspectives;**

(c) **Ensure the observance of the right of persons with disabilities to respect for their free and informed consent regarding healthcare in sexual and reproductive health and related services and in psychiatric services and interventions, through the use of quality protocols;**

(d) **Mainstream disability and gender perspectives into all health programmes, including the Lady Health Workers Programme, the health protection programme for marginalized persons and the People's Primary Healthcare Initiative,**

to ensure that they are inclusive of all persons with disabilities, including persons affected by leprosy and persons with disabilities living in rural and remote areas, and ensure accessibility of information and communications to all persons with disabilities;

(e) Ensure that the Ministry of Health provides accessible community-based mental health services to persons with disabilities, including through primary care clinics throughout the country, in both urban and rural areas;

(f) Provide the financial and human resources necessary to extend healthcare to all persons with disabilities, including persons with disabilities living in rural and remote areas, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons with disabilities.

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

47. The Committee is concerned that, despite the adoption of the National Strategic Action Plan on Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology (2021–2026), habilitation and rehabilitation centres are still scarce and concentrated primarily in urban areas, and that private therapy is expensive, making it unaffordable for most persons with disabilities.

48. **Recalling the link between articles 25 and 26 of the Convention and target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Review and update the National Strategic Action Plan on Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology (2021–2026), as necessary, to ensure that habilitation and rehabilitation centres are established throughout the country, including community-based rehabilitation centres for rural and remote areas, with robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, that the locations of these centres are widely publicized to persons with disabilities throughout the country and that affordable assistive technologies are available;**

(b) **Ensure the affordability of habilitation and rehabilitation services, including by strengthening public provision and introducing financial support mechanisms.**

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

49. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The high unemployment among persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, and the use of medically dominated, diagnosis-based disability assessments, which reinforce assumptions of incapacity to work;

(b) The lack of a policy framework at the federal and provincial levels to promote access to the open labour market for persons with disabilities, in particular in rural areas, in conformity with the Convention;

(c) Sheltered workshops and the situation of persons with disabilities therein, and the lack of concrete plans to replace these workshops with inclusive work environments;

(d) The noticeable disparities in employment quotas among the provinces, and the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms;

(e) The absence of effective mechanisms for implementation and enforcement, including accessible complaint and redress procedures, to deal with the denial of reasonable accommodation in the workplace.

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

(a) **Take measures to reduce unemployment among persons with disabilities, including by adopting the human rights model in assessing disability, and ensure that persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities, receive the education**

**and training necessary to enable their integration into the labour market on an equal basis with others;**

**(b) Develop and implement coherent federal and provincial policies that ensure equal access to the labour market for persons with disabilities;**

**(c) Take measures to facilitate the transition of persons with disabilities from sheltered workshops to inclusive employment in the open market;**

**(d) Harmonize provisions on employment quotas in provincial laws, in line with the Convention, and strengthen their implementation across all provinces, including by establishing effective monitoring mechanisms, accountability measures and sanctions for non-compliance;**

**(e) Establish effective mechanisms at the federal and provincial levels to promote reasonable accommodation in the workplace, including by establishing accessible complaint and redress mechanisms to address cases of the denial thereof.**

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

51. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The eligibility criteria for certain social support services, such as the Himmat Card in Punjab Province and the Benazir Income Support Programme, which rely on poverty targeting through proxy means testing and/or disability certification based on medical assessments of a person's capability to work, thereby failing to taking into account the extra costs related to disability and limiting access for persons with disabilities who experience barriers but do not meet medical thresholds;

(b) The lack of clarity regarding the extent to which social protection programmes rely on zakat as a source of funding, in comparison with allocations from the State budget;

(c) The perception by the Government that the services provided by Pakistan Bait-ul-Maal are part of the social protection system, despite Bait-ul-Maal acting as a charity by nature and depending on donations from individuals and institutions in addition to the allocated budget from the State;

(d) The low coverage of persons with disabilities by social protection programmes, and the inadequacy of financial entitlements to ensure an adequate standard of living.

52. **Recalling the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, with regard to empowering and promoting 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, through their representative organizations:**

**(a) Review and reform the social protection system for persons with disabilities, in conformity with the principles and provisions in the Convention and the Sustainable Development Goals, including by ensuring that eligibility criteria are based on the human rights model of disability and take into account disability-related extra costs and the different individual requirements of persons with disabilities to have access to social services and live independently;**

**(b) Ensure that social protection programmes and services are adequately and sustainably funded through public budgetary allocations, including by mainstreaming them into State and provincial budgets through disability-inclusive financing systems, and increase transparency regarding the role of zakat and other supplementary sources in financing such programmes and services;**

**(c) Expand the coverage of social protection programmes for persons with disabilities and increase the level of financial entitlements to ensure an adequate standard of living, in line with the Convention.**

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

53. The Committee notes the development of the Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion Framework (2024–2028), which is aimed at revising electoral laws, policies and procedures and enhancing voter registration and the participation of persons in vulnerable situations, including persons with disabilities. However, it is concerned about:

(a) The ineffective engagement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in developing the framework, and the insufficient provisions therein to ensure full accessibility for voters and candidates with disabilities in the general and provincial elections;

(b) The lack of data on the proportion of voters and candidates with disabilities in the general and provincial elections;

(c) The legal and procedural barriers that limit the participation of persons with disabilities in political parties;

(d) The lack of measures to facilitate access to decision-making positions for persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities.

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

(a) **Ensure close consultation with and the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in reviewing and reforming electoral legislation, policies and procedures and the laws and regulations governing political parties;**

(b) **Take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully, freely and independently exercise their right to vote and to be elected in general and provincial elections;**

(c) **Develop database containing disaggregated data about voters and candidates with disabilities in all elections, including data on accessible polling stations, their geographical distribution and the accessibility features provided;**

(d) **Take targeted measures to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life, including within political parties and in decision-making positions, with particular attention to women with disabilities.**

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

55. The Committee welcomes the State Party's accession to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled. However, it is concerned about:

(a) A persistent misconception in political circles that sports, culture and leisure activities for persons with disabilities are "luxury services", and the failure to recognize them as a fundamental human right;

(b) The inaccessibility of the physical environment and of information and communications at cultural venues, in addition to the lack of provision of sign language for most cultural activities.

**56. 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) **Actively invest in programmes that foster social relationships and friendships among persons with disabilities through their participation in artistic, recreational and sports activities;**

(b) **Provide full and independent access to cultural and entertainment venues, including public libraries, museums, tourist sites, social and cultural clubs, theatres and cinemas, and information and communications in accessible formats for all persons with disabilities in all provinces;**

(c) **Provide sign language interpretation for all cultural and recreational programmes and activities;**

(d) **Take measures to ensure the effective implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty.**

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

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

57. The Committee welcomes the incorporation of the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning into the Seventh Population and Housing Census, in 2023, and the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey. However, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) **The significant discrepancies in data on the prevalence of disability, with the Seventh Population and Housing Census indicating that 3.1 per cent of the population are persons with disabilities, while specialized national and international agencies estimate the figure to be at least 9 per cent, reflecting methodological gaps in data collection;**

(b) **The lack of disaggregated data about the situation of persons with disabilities in key areas, such as employment, socioeconomic status, experience of domestic violence, education and access to healthcare services.**

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

(a) **Adopt a harmonized and reliable methodology, based on the human rights model of disability, in defining and identifying disability, and conduct a comprehensive survey beyond data derived from disability certification and card systems;**

(b) **Systemically collect, analyse and disseminate data on persons with disabilities, disaggregated by age, sex, gender, ethnicity, urban or rural location, migratory status and other characteristics relevant in the national context, in all areas of life, in order to inform evidence-based policymaking, planning and monitoring.**

#### **International cooperation (art. 32)**

59. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) **The lack of disability inclusion in programmes for international development cooperation;**

(b) **The limited participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in identifying national and provincial priorities for projects financed through international cooperation agreements.**

60. **Recalling the Amman-Berlin Declaration on Global Disability Inclusion, which was endorsed by the State Party, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Mainstream disability throughout international cooperation programmes;**

(b) **Effectively engage persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the design, implementation and monitoring of international cooperation programmes, and closely consult them in identifying priorities for such programmes;**

(c) **Take measures to strengthen its cooperation for the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032, and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.**

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

61. The Committee welcomes the accreditation of the National Commission for Human Rights with A status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. However, it is concerned about:

(a) The lack of information on the capacity of the National Monitoring and Reporting Framework, a coordination mechanism operated by the Ministry of Human Rights, to effectively coordinate the implementation of the Convention;

(b) The limited visibility and accessibility of the National Commission for Human Rights, and the absence of independent and effective monitoring mechanisms at the provincial level;

(c) The absence of formal mechanisms to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention.

62. **Recalling its guidelines on independent monitoring frameworks and their participation in the work of the Committee, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Establish competent coordination mechanisms and designate dedicated focal points at the federal and provincial levels to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention, and publicly report on progress;**

(b) **Establish competent independent monitoring mechanisms and strengthen the existing ones at both the federal and provincial levels, including by reinforcing the mandate of the National Commission for Human Rights with regard to the rights of persons with disabilities and providing it with the necessary resources;**

(c) **Establish mechanisms to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention at the federal and provincial levels.**

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

63. 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**

64. 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 6, on general principles and obligations, 22, on equal recognition before the law, and 30, on freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse.

65. 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.

66. 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, including Easy Read, and to make them available on official websites.

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

#### Next periodic report

68. The combined second to seventh periodic reports are in principle due on 5 August 2038, under the simplified reporting procedure. The Committee will establish and communicate the exact due date of the combined periodic reports of the State Party in line with a future clear and regularized schedule for reporting by States Parties<sup>7</sup> and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting for the State Party. The combined periodic reports should cover the entire period up to the time of their submission.

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<sup>7</sup> General Assembly resolution 79/165, para. 6.