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**New York City’s Disability Pride Parade**

**July 9, 2017**

**H.E. Mr. Georgi Panayotov, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations and President of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Distinguished Commissioner Calise,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to congratulate you all on the 27th Anniversary of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

It is an honour to address you today on behalf of the Government of Bulgaria and also in my capacity as President of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The 10th Session of the Conference which was held last month at the United Nations Headquarters here in New York was of particular importance as it formally started the Second Decade of the Convention by reaffirming the commitment for a more participatory and inclusive implementation of the Convention in close cooperation with persons with disabilities themselves and their representative organizations.

The Conference has been gaining importance in the last couple of years and has now become the most import global forum on the rights of persons with disabilities. It serves as a useful platform to forge partnerships among the different stakeholders – Member States, persons with disabilities, civil society, the UN System, and others – with a view to further promoting the principles of the Convention and ensuring that the human rights of over a billion persons with disabilities in the world are protected and upheld.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - the CRPD - is a unique treaty in many ways – it is the most recent and most progressive of all human rights treaties, and most importantly, it is the only treaty that recognizes the role of the people it is trying to impact.

It is in this spirit that Bulgaria as President of the Conference has been strongly advocating for the full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all deliberations related to the implementation of the CRPD.

One of my main priorities as President of the Conference is promoting the realization of all human rights of persons with disabilities and their empowerment and inclusion in society on an equal basis with others.

I would like to highlight also the importance of the full and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all decision-making processes. And this is my message to you today: inclusion and participation - we all need to take action for the human rights of persons with disabilities.

Be proud of your abilities, be vocal and proactive, stand up for your rights and know that the global community is supporting you!

**Thank you!**