



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
BULGARIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**2017 International Day of Persons with Disabilities - 3 December**

*Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies for all*

**New York, 1 December 2017, CR 4, UNHQ, am session**

**H.E. Mr. Georgi Panayotov, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN**

**Opening remarks**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished guests,**

On today's important occasion when we mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities I would like to encourage all of us to use this opportunity to reaffirm our strong commitment to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As President of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD I am determined to further advance the human rights of persons with disabilities by promoting the full implementation of the Convention.

The CRPD is the first international human rights convention of the 21st century and in the 11 years since its adoption, the CRPD has also become one of the most quickly and widely ratified of all the international human right treaties with 175 States Parties already, including one organization - the European Union. Our mission is to turn the firm commitments of States Parties to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities into concrete actions and tangible results on the ground ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy all human rights and are included in society on an equal basis with others. To overcome the social barriers associated with disabilities and build sustainable and resilient societies for all a transformative and inclusive approach is required that involves persons with disabilities as equal partners in all relevant processes at national and global levels. If we are to achieve inclusive and accessible societies and the realization of the human rights of all we need to promote a human rights-based approach focused on supported rather than substituted decision-making by ensuring that persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, participate and are included in decision-making processes that impact their lives.

Over the years the Conference of States Parties has become one of the largest and most important global forums on the rights of persons with disabilities where the fruitful partnership with civil society and organizations of persons with disabilities is realized setting the standard for how the UN, Member States and persons with disabilities implement the core principles of the CRPD. The Conference serves as a useful platform for States Parties to share experience and best practices for the implementation of the Convention through various peer strategies which contribute also to increasing the number of ratifications along with other mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council. I encourage these practices as invaluable to our shared goal of reaching universal ratification.

With our 10th Conference of States Parties earlier this year we started the second decade of the CRPD with the ambition to further strengthen the implementation of the Convention by involving more actively persons with disabilities and their representative organizations from the initial stages of preparation of the Conference through formulating the topics to actively participating in the discussions at all levels, including as speakers and co-chairs of the meetings. The round table discussions during this year's Conference focused on some of the most pertinent issues for persons with disabilities related to the implementation of some of the major global agreements of the last couple of years – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which for the first time has included and recognized persons with disabilities as agents of development, commitments in the humanitarian area and the New Urban Agenda – the success of which would largely depend on how we engage persons with disabilities and take necessary action to empower them and ensure their full inclusion and participation. The Conference explored the nexus between the rights of persons with disabilities and the ambition to build resilient societies where no one is left behind by promoting inclusive urban development and humanitarian action that takes into account the rights of the most vulnerable and marginalized in our societies. States Parties reaffirmed the importance of the inclusion and active participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the design, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all relevant policies and programmes, including in the areas of humanitarian and emergency action, disaster preparedness and response and urban development.

As we are now entering the final and crucial stage of the elaboration of the two Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees respectively and considering that persons with disabilities are over-represented among those on the move, particularly among those forcibly displaced by conflict and disaster, I find it imperative for us as States Parties to the CRPD and for the international community in general to reaffirm its commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities in the process of negotiations and consultations toward the adoption of these global agreements of paramount importance.

**Thank you!**