



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
20 May 2022
English
Original: Spanish

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Concluding observations on the initial report of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the initial report of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela¹ at its 562nd, 564th and 566th meetings², held in a hybrid mode on 11, 14 and 15 March 2022. It adopted the present concluding observations at its 578th meeting, also held in a hybrid mode on 23 March 2022.
2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which was prepared in accordance with the Committee's reporting guidelines, and thanks the State party for its written replies³ to the list of issues prepared by the Committee.⁴
3. The Committee commends the State party for having agreed to have its initial report reviewed in a hybrid mode session, given the extraordinary circumstances due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Committee also appreciates the fruitful dialogue held with the State party's high-level delegation, both in Geneva and online from the State party's capital, which was diverse and included representatives of the relevant government ministries.

II. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the adoption of legislative and institutional measures and the implementation of policies in accordance with the Convention, particularly:
 - (a) The amendment of the Act on Persons with Disabilities to remove terms contrary to the Convention;
 - (b) The entry into force of the Prisons Code, published in Official Gazette No. 6.207 (special issue) of 28 December 2015, replacing the previous Code, which contained terms contrary to the Convention;
 - (c) The establishment of the Standing Commission for Persons with Disabilities within the National Constituent Assembly and the creation of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities;
 - (d) The preparation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan, known as the National Plan 2019–2025, published in Official Gazette No. 6442 (special issue) of 3 April 2019, with the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities;

* Adopted by the Committee at its twenty-sixth session (7–25 March 2022).

¹ [CRPD/C/VEN/1](#).

² [CRPD/C/SR.562](#), [CRPD/C/SR.564](#) and [CRPD/C/SR.566](#).

³ [CRPD/C/VEN/RQ/1](#) and [CRPD/C/VEN/RQ/1/Corr.1](#).

⁴ [CRPD/C/VEN/Q/1](#).



(e) The preparation of the National Human Rights Plan 2016–2019, published in Official Gazette No. 6.217 (special issue) of 2 March 2016, which includes persons with disabilities in two of its cross-cutting principles.

III. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

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

5. While the Committee takes note of the State party's intention to amend existing laws in accordance with the Convention, it is concerned by the lack of implementing regulations for the 2007 Act on Persons with Disabilities and the fact that the bill on the protection, care and dignified treatment of persons with disabilities is still under discussion.

6. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that any legislative amendments are in conformity with the principles enshrined in the Convention, in line with the human rights-based model of disability and mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities; and that it ensure the active participation of organizations of persons with disabilities at all stages of the related discussions and drafting process, regardless of their political affiliation.**

7. **The Committee, recalling its general comment No. 7 (2018), recommends that the State party promote the effective and independent participation of organizations of persons with disabilities, including organizations for women, children, older persons, indigenous persons and persons of African descent, in decision-making in all processes that concern them.**

B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

8. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) There is no law or mechanism for identifying and punishing acts of discrimination against persons with disabilities, including persons with sequelae of leprosy, persons of African descent and women, that provides for preventive measures, monitoring, sanctions and full redress, including non-repetition;

(b) The obligation to provide reasonable accommodation is not mainstreamed in the State party's legislation, accommodations of this sort are infrequent and the denial of reasonable accommodation is not recognized as a form of discrimination.

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

(a) **Adopt a law on the prevention and elimination of discrimination, based on general comment No. 6 (2018) and the commitments made at the Global Disability Summit 2022, that expressly refers to disability-based discrimination and that mainstreams recognition of multiple and intersectional discrimination, particularly against women, children, indigenous persons and persons of African descent with disabilities, persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities and persons living with leprosy, in all spheres of life;**

(b) **Put in place a specific, independent mechanism for receiving, investigating and following up on complaints of discrimination while also providing for the imposition of sanctions in both the public and private spheres and for measures that will afford full redress; establish a system for compiling data disaggregated by age, sex, ethnic origin and basis of the complaint; and disseminate the results of the follow-up conducted;**

(c) **Incorporate an explicit provision into its domestic legislation under which the denial of reasonable accommodation is defined as a form of discrimination on the basis of disability.**

Women with disabilities (art. 6)

10. It is of concern to the Committee that:

(a) In both urban and rural areas, women and girls with disabilities do not benefit from special protection against discrimination, gender-based violence and the harmful effects of the economic situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

(b) Shelters for women and girls who are survivors of violence are not physically accessible, do not use accessible modes of information and communication and do not have sufficient trained personnel for women and girls with disabilities;

(c) Teenage pregnancy rates remain high and that there is still no information on how many of these pregnancies are among women with disabilities.

11. The Committee recommends that the State party, with reference to general comment No. 6 (2018) on equality and non-discrimination and general comment No. 3 (2016) on women and girls with disabilities, and taking into account targets 10.2, 10.3, 16 and 16.b of the Sustainable Development Goals:

(a) **Adopt public policies aimed at preventing and eliminating discrimination against girls and women with disabilities that include a gender perspective and a focus on sexual and reproductive health training as a means of preventing sexual violence and human trafficking;**

(b) **Develop strategies to ensure the accessibility of the physical environment, information and communications and the availability of trained staff to support victims with disabilities, and provide reasonable accommodation in accordance with the human rights model used in the Convention;**

(c) **Take measures to prevent high rates of teenage pregnancy and gather information to determine how many of these pregnancies are among teenage girls with disabilities;**

(d) **Ensure that institutions such as the Ministry of People's Power for Women and Gender Equality, the National Institute for Women and the Women's Development Bank, as well as prosecutors' offices and courts specializing in women's rights, have departments specializing in women and girls with disabilities.**

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

12. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of information on and monitoring and assessment of the situation of children with disabilities who were in institutions that were subsequently closed down;

(b) The fact that children with disabilities, including those who are deaf, blind, deafblind or of short stature, are not specifically included, in a cross-cutting manner, in domestic legislation and that their opinions are not properly taken into account in matters that concern them, especially in indigenous communities and rural areas.

13. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Conduct a census and gather statistics on children with disabilities who were in institutions that subsequently closed down and on any rights violations they may have suffered in a family setting or while living on the streets; and put in place programmes to ensure their inclusion in family life, either by placing them with their nuclear family, if they have one, or with a foster family, and provide such families with the support they need, both in kind and financial, to participate in community life;**

(b) **Carry out any legislative reforms with the participation of organizations representing children with disabilities so that the protection of their rights is mainstreamed in them and establish effective mechanisms to enable them to participate actively in matters that concern them.**

Awareness-raising (art. 8)

14. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The Ministry of People's Power for Public Health is responsible for awareness-raising campaigns, thus reinforcing the medical approach to disability, and that organizations representing persons with disabilities are not involved in designing such campaigns;

(b) Stereotypes and harmful attitudes towards persons with disabilities persist in the State party and that the approach taken towards them continues to be welfare- and not human rights-based, in accordance with the Convention.

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

(a) **Reinforce and increase intensive training on the rights of persons with disabilities from a human rights perspective for public officials, health-care professionals, professionals working in the justice system and others, as well as members of the community at large;**

(b) **Carry out media campaigns, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, aimed at eliminating prejudices, stereotypes and harmful practices in respect of persons with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities and persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, in both urban and rural areas.**

Accessibility (art. 9)

16. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of a comprehensive plan to ensure the accessibility of the physical environment, information, communications and transport;

(b) The lack of information on compliance with the regulations for the protection of the rights of users of telecommunications services, which imposes a duty on telecommunications service operators to make available terminal equipment suited to the needs of persons with different types of disabilities;

(c) The lack of data on the interpretation services provided by the National Accessible Communication Service to persons who are hard of hearing and deaf persons in public and private institutions;

(d) The lack of physical accessibility and accessible communications and information, and the lack of trained staff at hospitals to provide care during the pandemic.

17. **With reference to its general comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility, and bearing in mind Sustainable Development Goal 11, the Committee recommends that the State party, in coordination with organizations of persons with disabilities:**

(a) **Develop a policy and comprehensive, broad-based plan for ensuring the accessibility of the physical environment, including public transport services in cities and provinces;**

(b) **Ensure the accessibility of the physical environment, information and communications in facilities open to the public, with pamphlets being provided in accessible modes and means of communication such as Braille and other alternative modes and means;**

(c) **Monitor compliance with the regulations for the protection of the rights of users of telecommunications services and gather statistics on persons with disabilities who use those services;**

(d) **Monitor public services, such as health-care and judicial services, where interpretation in Venezuelan sign language is provided and introduce a registration system with disaggregated data on the number of sign language interpreters available, with the aim of ensuring the accessibility of information and public services;**

(e) **Collect and publish data on how persons with disabilities coped with the pandemic in terms of accessibility of the physical environment, information and communications.**

Right to life (art. 10)

18. The Committee is concerned about the rates of social violence, including a homicide rate of 23.1 per cent, and reports of crackdowns during demonstrations resulting in death or disability.

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

(a) **Conduct formal investigations into the causes of the homicide rate and, in particular, into how many persons with disabilities are included in this rate;**

(b) **Investigate how many persons with disabilities have been assaulted or imprisoned during the demonstrations, how many people have been left with a disability during these events and what measures have been taken to compensate them.**

Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)

20. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of contingency plans for emergencies of any kind that take into account persons with disabilities, as was observed during the pandemic;

(b) The situation of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, which has a disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities.

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

(a) **Take steps, based on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, article 11 of the Convention and the situations that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that prevention and risk-reduction protocols are validated by persons with disabilities through their representative organizations, and allocate a specific budget and assign trained staff for that purpose;**

(b) **Apply follow-up protocols to provide ongoing support to migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers with disabilities transiting through the State party.**

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

22. The Committee notes that:

(a) Although article 410 of the Civil Code, under which persons with disabilities were considered civilly incompetent, was expressly repealed, the Committee is concerned that systems based on substitute decision-making, and the concepts of guardianship and curatorship, were not abolished;

(b) The National Assembly is currently drafting a new piece of legislation on persons with disabilities.

23. **The Committee recommends that, bearing in mind article 12 of the Convention and its general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law, the State party:**

(a) **Ensure that the new legislation is consistent with the Convention, including with regard to the removal of restrictions on the legal capacity of persons with disabilities, and that it replaces substitute decision-making systems that deny persons with disabilities their legal capacity, including guardianship and curatorship, with supported decision-making systems; and take all measures to provide tailored support, properly inform persons with disabilities about such alternatives and train the personnel involved;**

(b) **Ensure the effective, independent participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in the reform process.**

Access to justice (art. 13)

24. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Restrictions still exist that prevent persons with disabilities from enjoying full access to justice on an equal footing with others, since they are limited to judicial buildings where the physical environment, information and communications are accessible, and that staff training remains incomplete;

(b) The Public Interpreters Act does not consider Venezuelan sign language interpreters to be assistant justice officials.

25. Bearing in mind article 13 of the Convention, the International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities and target 16.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Amend the Civil Code to remove the restrictions preventing deaf or blind persons from giving testimony during legal proceedings;**

(b) **Ensure that persons with disabilities who are subject to or participate in court proceedings have a person of their choosing to help them make decisions and to communicate with them, in line with the safeguards set out in general comment No. 1 (2014);**

(c) **Compile a list of judicial establishments that are physically accessible, provide information in accessible formats and use accessible modes of communication, and ensure that all establishments where justice is administered, without exception, meet those accessibility standards;**

(d) **Continue the training of judicial officials and make age- and gender-appropriate procedural adjustments, setting deadlines and goals and allocating resources to this end;**

(e) **Amend the Public Interpreters Act to include Venezuelan sign language interpreters so that they have legal standing to participate in judicial processes.**

Liberty and security of person (art. 14)

26. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The amendment of the Criminal Code and the updates in relation to mental health and family issues are still being debated;

(b) Following the closure of psychiatric hospitals and other institutions, the fate of the persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities who left them is unknown;

(c) There is no information available on persons deprived of their liberty on the basis of disability and that there are still reports of police crackdowns and deprivation of liberty of persons with disabilities.

27. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Take, as a matter of urgency, the appropriate measures to amend the Criminal Code and mental health legislation to align them with the provisions of the Convention, in close consultation with organizations of persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities;**

(b) **Collect information on persons with disabilities and their situation – whether they live alone, in a family setting or on the streets – following their departure from the institutions that were closed down;**

(c) **Develop, in close consultation with organizations of persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, protection programmes for persons who have left institutions, and provide for a strict oversight mechanism that enables the filing of complaints of ill-treatment or violence and includes monitoring, sanctions and measures to afford full redress;**

(d) **Take, in close consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, steps to train police officers with the aim of preventing and punishing involuntary detention, and provide for measures of redress.**

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

28. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Since the State party has no national mechanism for the prevention of torture, there is no information on the number of persons with disabilities who are subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

(b) The State does not have legislation on human trafficking and therefore has no information on the number of persons with disabilities who are victims of this crime.

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

(a) **Establish a national mechanism for the prevention of torture that makes it possible to file complaints and has a monitoring, evaluation and redress system;**

(b) **Take the appropriate measures to draft and pass a law on the prevention of human trafficking that includes persons with disabilities, especially women and children with disabilities, in a cross-cutting manner.**

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

30. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of specific provisions in the State party's legislation to prevent, investigate and punish violence, neglect and abuse in respect of persons with disabilities in institutions, in the home or in public spaces, and the lack of monitoring, redress and disaggregated data, particularly in respect of women and girls with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, who are often exposed to harassment, abuse and acts of sexual and other types of violence;

(b) Reports of violence against children with disabilities and the fact that corporal punishment against such children is tolerated.

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

(a) **Take all measures necessary to ensure that gender and disability are mainstreamed in legislation on the prevention of violence; the reform of mental health legislation is essential in this connection;**

(b) **Strengthen existing mechanisms and protocols by incorporating specific measures to prevent, eliminate, monitor, penalize and provide redress for all forms of violence, exploitation or abuse against persons with disabilities, including those who remain in or have left institutions, in the home or in public spaces;**

(c) **Establish a system for collecting data, disaggregated by sex, age and disability, on complaints of violence and abuse committed against persons with disabilities and gather information on related preventive, protective, monitoring and reparative measures;**

(d) **Intensify its efforts to prevent and eliminate violence and corporal punishment against children in general and against children with disabilities in particular.**

Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)

32. The Committee is concerned about the persistence of involuntary confinement and treatment and non-consensual medical practices in respect of persons with disabilities, including the forced sterilization of women and girls with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities.

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party repeal all legal provisions that permit involuntary treatment, and prohibit involuntary treatment and restraint and the forced sterilization of persons with disabilities.**

Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)

34. The Committee notes with concern the lack of information on displaced or migrant persons with disabilities.

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

(a) **Ensure that migrant persons with disabilities are able to exercise their rights on an equal footing with others;**

(b) **Establish monitoring and assessment mechanisms at its borders for the identification, processing and protection of migrant persons with disabilities that use information and adapted procedures in accessible formats, individual adaptations such as the facilitation of physical access and trained personnel.**

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

36. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Persons with disabilities are largely unaware of the implementation of support programmes for independent living;

(b) The departure from the country of trained health, education and other professionals is limiting the opportunities for persons with disabilities to live independently in the community;

(c) Projects related to persons with disabilities are the responsibility of the Ministry of People's Power for Public Health, thus reinforcing the medical approach to disability, which is at odds with the Convention.

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

(a) **Raise awareness, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, of the programmes in place to support persons with disabilities in the community;**

(b) **Ensure that support services for independent living in the community have interdisciplinary staff;**

(c) **Take measures to promote independent living in the community, including personal assistance, sign language interpreters and other forms of individual support for persons with disabilities with a human-rights based approach, through the ministries for the economy, education, labour, culture and others.**

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

38. It is of concern to the Committee that:

(a) There is no information on compliance with the Act on Social Responsibility in Radio, Television and Electronic Media, which makes compulsory the use of subtitles, translation into Venezuelan sign language and other necessary measures, and that not all official websites are accessible;

(b) Venezuelan sign language is not recognized as an official language;

(c) Certified interpreter training courses are inadequate or insufficient to meet the demand for translation services from deaf persons;

(d) Persons with disabilities do not have accessible and easily available information on the implementation of programmes and policies that concern them or on the action taken by the National Council for Persons with Disabilities.

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

- (a) **Take steps to promote access to information and communications in public services and in the media in accessible formats, including news broadcasts and television and radio programmes;**
- (b) **Recognize Venezuelan sign language as an official language of the State party;**
- (c) **Increase the number of certified interpreter training courses with the effective participation of organizations of deaf persons in identifying their specific needs;**
- (d) **Disseminate widely information on the implementation of programmes for persons with disabilities by the Government and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities in accessible media and formats.**

Respect for home and the family (art. 23)

40. The Committee is concerned that there are statutory restrictions on the rights of persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities to start a family, raise their children or adopt.

41. **The Committee recommends that the State party review its legislation and explicitly recognize the right of persons with disabilities, including persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, to marry, start a family, assume parental responsibilities and adopt on an equal footing with others.**

Education (art. 24)

42. The Committee notes with concern that the State party still makes use of a special education model, with schools for persons with hearing impairments, visual impairments, intellectual disabilities and physical disabilities, and that there is a lack of information on the progress made in introducing Venezuelan sign language in educational institutions.

43. **The Committee recommends that the State party, on the basis of general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, bearing in mind target 4.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals and in line with the commitments made at the Global Disability Summit 2022:**

- (a) **Develop a national inclusive education plan for all persons with disabilities at all levels; redirect budget allocations from special education to the regular education system; provide personalized assistance starting from the preschool level and continuing on to higher education levels; provide appropriate training for teachers; and incorporate special education teachers into the regular education system as a form of support;**
- (b) **Ensure that support, specifically designed teaching materials in alternative accessible formats, modes and means of communication, and information and assistive technologies are provided and that reasonable accommodation for individual requirements is made in all educational institutions;**
- (c) **Assess the progress made in introducing Venezuelan sign language, as well as other formats such as Braille and Easy Read, in all educational institutions.**

Health (art. 25)

44. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The lack of information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities in terms of the implementation of preventive measures and accessibility of the physical environment, information and communications, trained personnel in health-care centres and disaggregated data on how many persons with disabilities contracted the virus, how many required a mechanical ventilator and how many died;

(b) The shortage of medicines, which is causing severe complications such as ulcer infections in persons with spinal cord injuries;

(c) Insufficient technical, human and economic measures and resources for guaranteeing access to sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities, especially women and children with disabilities.

45. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Carry out a specific study on the extent to which persons with disabilities have been affected by the pandemic, including whether they were consulted about the implementation of preventive measures, how many contracted the virus, how many had access to a mechanical ventilator, how sequelae were monitored and how many died;

(b) Adopt measures and allocate technical resources to ensure the accessibility of the physical environment, equipment, information and communications in all places where health-care services are provided and to ensure the availability of information in accessible means and modes, including documents in Braille and Easy Read, trained personnel and certified sign language interpreters;

(c) Take specific measures to avoid medical complications for persons with disabilities as a result of the shortage of medicines;

(d) Design specific health-care protocols for persons with disabilities, especially training programmes on sexual and reproductive health, with a cross-cutting gender and intersectional perspective.

Work and employment (art. 27)

46. The Committee is concerned that the State party does not have a structured programme to integrate persons with disabilities into the labour market, sheltered workshops continue to be a form of employment and denial of reasonable accommodation in the workplace is not explicitly defined as a form of discrimination.

47. The Committee recommends that, in accordance with the Convention and bearing in mind target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the State party:

(a) Develop a national programme to integrate persons with disabilities into the labour market, which includes quotas in the public sector, in order to increase the number of such persons who are employed in regular positions in open work environments, and adopt legislative measures to penalize companies that do not hire a sufficient number of persons with disabilities to fill regular positions;

(b) Amend its legislation to recognize denial of reasonable accommodation in the workplace as a form of discrimination;

(c) Thoroughly train persons with disabilities for employment in regular paid positions in both urban and rural areas.

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

48. The Committee is concerned that persons with disabilities, especially those living in poverty, are most affected by the economic blockade against the State party and the pandemic, which may force them into begging, and that access to social programmes is limited to those covered by the *Carnet de la Patria* ("Card for the Nation") system.

49. The Committee recommends that, in accordance with the Convention and bearing in mind target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the State party:

(a) Determine how many persons with disabilities are living in poverty or extreme poverty, according to the unsatisfied basic needs method;

(b) Carry out a survey on the economic situation of persons with disabilities during and after the pandemic, and increase the amount of the benefits granted to them;

(c) Take steps to include social programmes in legislation on social welfare, the economy, labour, health and education so that they have a fixed budget and targets

and are subject to assessment and follow-up, especially in respect of persons with disabilities, and collect information on the effectiveness of such programmes during the pandemic;

(d) **Not restrict access to social programmes to those in possession of a *Carnet de la Patria*.**

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

50. The Committee takes note of the process of updating the electoral register to identify more voters with disabilities, but remains concerned about their limited participation in the reform and the fact that persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, are underrepresented in electoral processes and selection procedures for decision-making bodies.

51. **The Committee recommends that persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities and persons with intensive support needs, should be consulted through their representative organizations about potential electoral policy and law reforms to guarantee that they are able to vote, be elected to public office and participate in decision-making bodies.**

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

52. The Committee is concerned that the physical environment, information and communications in sport, recreational and cultural facilities are not accessible to persons with disabilities, and that there is no information available on the National Register for Artists with Disabilities or on the support available for its activities.

53. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the accessibility of the physical environment, information and communications for persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, in sport, recreational and cultural centres, in both urban and rural areas; increase training for public officials who work in such centres; use guides and information in accessible means and modes, including Braille, Easy Read and Venezuelan sign language; and widely disseminate information about the National Register for Artists with Disabilities and the procedures for gaining access to the support available.**

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

54. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) There are no reliable statistics available to the public, or persons with disabilities in particular, on the social programmes designed to support persons with disabilities, or their implementation and follow-up;

(b) No information is available on the assessment process for persons with disabilities for the purpose of issuing disability certificates;

(c) No information is available on employers' compliance with their obligation to submit biannual reports to the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and the National Institute of Statistics on the number of employees with disabilities.

55. **The Committee recommends that the State party, based on the short set of questions of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics:**

(a) **Incorporate, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, a human rights perspective into the information contained in the registers used to collect data and statistics on disability, and widely disseminate information on the services to which they have access, including how many such services exist, and on the implementation of relevant policies and programmes;**

(b) **Ensure that the decision to issue disability certificates is made by an interdisciplinary group of professionals and not based solely on a diagnostic approach;**

(c) **Ensure that employers circulate reports on the number of employees with disabilities in order to improve public policy in that area.**

International cooperation (art. 32)

56. The Committee is concerned that persons with disabilities do not always participate, through their representative organizations, in the design and implementation of international cooperation projects to ensure that such projects include a disability perspective.

57. **The Committee encourages the State party, based on the commitments made at the Global Disability Summit 2022, to:**

(a) **Carry out timely follow-up and inform this Committee and persons with disabilities themselves, through their representative organizations, about the plans and programmes relevant to them, such as inclusive development of communities and transport and the 2016 National Strategic Plan for an Inclusive Society;**

(b) **Incorporate, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, a disability perspective into national plans for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and into international cooperation programmes.**

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

58. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Despite it having been reported in 2017 that, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding signed in September 2019 with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, there were plans to create a national mechanism for follow-up to international human rights recommendations, no such mechanism has been established;

(b) The State party has not established an independent monitoring mechanism for following up on and assessing the application and implementation of the Convention.

59. **The Committee recommends that the State party establish an independent mechanism to monitor and assess international human rights recommendations and legally designate government focal points to mainstream disability rights in the implementation of the Convention, providing them with an adequate budget and sufficient resources; and include the Ombudsman's Office in the independent monitoring mechanism, in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), with the effective and independent participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.**

IV. Follow-up

Dissemination of information

60. 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 paragraph 11, on women with disabilities, and paragraph 17, on accessibility.

61. 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.

62. 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 report.

63. 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 the government website on human rights.

Next periodic report

64. The Committee requests the State party to submit its combined second, third and fourth periodic reports by 24 October 2027 and to include in them information on the implementation of the recommendations made in the present concluding observations. The Committee also requests the State party to submit the above-mentioned reports under the Committee's simplified reporting procedure, according to which the Committee prepares a list of issues at least one year prior to the due date set for the report of a State party. The replies of a State party to such a list of issues constitute its report.
