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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Concluding observations on the initial report of Sri Lanka*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Sri Lanka at its 847th and 848th meetings, held on 14 August 2026. It adopted the present concluding observations at its 858th meeting, held on 21 August 2026.

2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of Sri Lanka, which was prepared in accordance with the Committee's reporting guidelines, and thanks the State party for its written replies to the list of issues prepared by the Committee.

3. The Committee appreciates the fruitful and sincere dialogue held with the State party's delegation, which included representatives of the relevant government ministries.

II. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the legislative, administrative and policy measures taken by the State party to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and to implement the Convention since its ratification in 2016, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) The National Social Protection Policy, in 2024;

(b) The Women Empowerment Act No. 37, which includes provisions relevant to the economic empowerment and protection of women, including women with disabilities, in 2024;

(c) The establishment of the Parliamentary Caucus on Disability Inclusion, in 2023;

(d) The Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses (Amendment) Act No. 10, which strengthen the protection for victims and witnesses with disabilities, in 2023;

(e) The establishment of the Disability Unit of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, in 2022;

(f) The Intellectual Property (Amendment) Act No. 8, to implement the Marrakesh Treaty, of 2021;

(g) The National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights for the period 2017–2021, in 2017.

* Adopted by the Committee at its thirty-fifth session (12–27 August 2026).

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III. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

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

5. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) The Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 28 of 1996, the National Policy on Disability (2003), and related legal and policy frameworks are not yet fully harmonized with the Convention, contain derogatory concepts and terminology concerning persons with disabilities and reflect the medical model of disability;

(b) The Disability Rights Bill has not yet been enacted despite several years of drafting and consultation;

(c) The State party has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

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

(a) Review the existing disability-related legislation and policies and harmonize them with the provisions of the Convention, repeal or amend the legislation that includes derogatory concepts and terminology concerning persons with disabilities and replace elements of the medical model of disability with the principles of the human rights model of disability;

(b) Expedite the enactment of the Disability Rights Bill and ensure that it is fully aligned with the Convention and the human-rights model of disability;

(c) Consider ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

7. The Committee is concerned about the lack of participation of persons with disabilities, including diverse organizations of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, including women with disabilities, persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, persons affected by conflict-related disabilities and organizations from the Northern and Eastern Provinces, and in particular grass root organizations and organizations at subnational level, in the design, implementation and monitoring of disability-related laws, policies and programmes.

8. **The Committee recalls 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, and recommends that the State party establish entrenched procedures and provide the required resources to ensure persons with disabilities through their representative organisations are closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes at all levels, on the implementation of the Convention, including in the design, implementation and review of national policies.**

B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

9. The Committee is concerned:

(a) That the Constitution does not recognize disability-based discrimination and intersectional discrimination;

(b) That denial of reasonable accommodation is not explicitly recognized as a form of discrimination;

(c) That despite the availability of some existing procedures, there is a lack of a specific accessible and effective complaint mechanism for disability discrimination complaints;

(d) About discrimination of persons with disabilities in the banking sector, including the refusal to open accounts for persons with visual disabilities.

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

(a) Recognize multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination on the ground of disability and the intersection of disability with other grounds, such as age, sex, race, ethnicity, gender identity and any other status;

(b) Expedite the enactment of the Disability Rights Bill and ensure that it explicitly recognizes the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination;

(c) Put in place an accessible and effective complaint mechanism for persons with disabilities to report incidences of discrimination and provide persons with disabilities who have been subjected to discrimination with redress, compensation and rehabilitation and ensure that perpetrators are sanctioned;

(d) Ensure that service providers, including banks and other financial institutions, provide persons with disabilities with support with entering into contractual relations and the management of their financial affairs, including services offered and provided to the public.

Women with disabilities (art. 6)

11. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About the lack of inclusion of women with disabilities in the design and implementation of the Women Empowerment Act (2024), the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2023) and the Multi-Sectoral National Action Plan to Address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) for 2024 to 2028;

(b) That the existing patriarchal norms, attitudinal barriers and some customary laws prevent women and girls with disabilities from participation in public life and access to education, employment, social protection and health, in particular sexual and reproductive health services, marriage and inheritance;

(c) That women with disabilities in conflict-affected areas, former female combatants with disabilities and female-headed households continue to experience heightened social and economic exclusion and marginalization.

12. **The Committee recalls 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, and recommends that the State party:**

(a) Ensure disability-inclusive implementation of the Women Empowerment Act (2024), the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2023) and the Multi-Sectoral National Action Plan to Address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) for 2024 to 2028;

(b) Develop and implement awareness-raising campaigns and educational programmes throughout society, including at the family level, with regard to women with disabilities to promote respect for their rights and dignity, combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices, eliminate family and social customs that are discriminatory against women and girls with disabilities and ensure their access to social services and health, in particular sexual and reproductive health services and strengthen redress mechanisms to ensure that it is disability inclusive and accessible for women with disabilities;

(c) Strengthen the implementation of the national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, and develop and implement targeted programmes to promote the social inclusion, economic empowerment and leadership of women with disabilities, including those living in conflict-affected areas, former female combatants with disabilities and female-headed households and ensure their equal access to social protection,

healthcare, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, education, vocational training, employment and livelihood opportunities.

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

13. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About the lack of mechanisms available for children with disabilities to express their views freely on all matters affecting them;

(b) That children with disabilities in conflict-affected areas face additional barriers resulting from displacement, poverty, trauma and explosive remnants of war.

14. **Recalling the joint statement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the rights of children with disabilities (2022), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Establish a framework to operationalise and monitor the application of the principle of the evolving capacity of children with disabilities to ensure that they can form their views and express them freely in all matters affecting them, and ensure that these views are given due weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity;

(b) Ensure that children with disabilities affected by conflict, displacement and poverty have access to inclusive education, healthcare, rehabilitation, psychosocial support and social protection services in their communities.

Awareness-raising (art. 8)

15. The Committee is concerned about the high prevalence of stigma, prejudice, stereotyping, harmful attitudes and negative beliefs about the causes of disability that have a detrimental impact on the lives of children and adults with disabilities throughout the State party, as well as about the lack of awareness-raising campaigns about the dignity, abilities and rights of persons with disabilities in society and the absence of a long-term strategy for raising awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities and the human rights based model of disability.

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

(a) Adopt a national strategy to raise awareness of and combat discriminatory attitudes, negative stereotypes and prejudices against persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, women and children with disabilities, both in urban and rural and remote areas, and monitor its effectiveness;

(b) Strengthen training and awareness-raising programmes about the rights of persons with disabilities and the human rights model of disability in all areas of government, the judiciary, the police and the legal profession, at all levels of education, in public services, in the media and for the general public.

Accessibility (art. 9)

17. The Committee notes the State party's jurisprudence on accessibility, that it has launched the National Accessibility Audit and is developing accessibility regulations. However, it is concerned:

(a) About the lack of accessibility throughout the State party, across all mainstream essential services, housing, transport, information and telecommunications systems and facilities, and the adverse impact on children and adults with disabilities to participation and inclusion in all aspects of community life, in particular in rural, remote and conflict-affected areas;

(b) That the existing accessibility regulations are insufficient to comply with article 9 of the Convention, inadequately implemented and monitored, that sanctions for non-compliance with accessibility requirements remain ineffective, and about the failure to systematically integrate accessibility as a mandatory and enforceable principle, following a

universal design approach, in the development, procurement and regulation of goods, services, equipment and facilities, both in public and private sector.

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

(a) Ensure that the revised accessibility regulations are fully aligned with article 9 of the Convention and establish accessibility, based on the principle of universal design, as a mandatory and enforceable requirement applicable to goods, services, facilities, equipment, information and communications technologies, transportation and other services open or provided to the public, in both the public and private sectors;

(b) Expeditiously adopt and implement a comprehensive and adequately funded national accessibility action plan, with clear targets, timelines, monitoring mechanisms and sanctions for non-compliance, aimed at identifying and removing existing barriers to accessibility;

(c) Ensure that accessibility requirements are integrated into all public procurement processes, public funding mechanisms, infrastructure development projects and relevant regulatory frameworks;

(d) Strengthen monitoring and enforcement mechanisms and allocate the human, technical and financial resources necessary to ensure accessibility of buildings, transportation, information and communications, digital services and other facilities and services open or provided to the public throughout the territory of the State party, including in rural, remote and conflict-affected areas;

(e) Ensure that accessibility standards are regularly reviewed and updated in line with international accessibility standards and technological developments;

(f) Establish effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, including sanctions for non-compliance and the possibility for persons with disabilities to seek judicial redress.

Right to life (art. 10)

19. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About the absence of provisions regarding the right to life in the State party's Constitution;

(b) About the absence of a comprehensive monitoring framework for deaths and threats to the lives of persons with disabilities in institutional and residential settings, and reports of deaths and serious incidents involving persons with disabilities in residential facilities, including the Anguruwathota fire of June 2026;

(c) About the absence of disability-disaggregated information regarding suicides and other preventable deaths involving persons with disabilities.

20. **The Committee recommends that the State party recognize the right to life in its Constitution, and establish independent mechanisms to monitor, investigate and prevent deaths and serious incidents affecting persons with disabilities and ensure accountability where violations occur. It also recommends that the State party collect and publish disability-disaggregated mortality data, including data concerning suicide and institutional deaths.**

Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)

21. The Committee is concerned:

(a) That despite the fact that the National Disaster Management Plan (2023-2030) contains provisions on persons with disabilities, it does not provide for extensive disability-specific measures, targets or implementation mechanism;

(b) That residual risks from landmines and unexploded ordnance continue to affect some conflict-affected areas, particularly in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, and disproportionately affect children, returning displaced persons, and persons with disabilities;

(c) About the lack of the effective inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction strategies in the State party;

(d) That persons with disabilities, in particular internally displaced persons with disabilities, women and girls with disabilities, persons with disabilities belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, persons with disabilities in institutions and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities are disproportionately affected in situations of risk, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters.

22. **Recalling the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and the Committee's Guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies[1], the Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including by:**

(a) Applying a disability lens to include the unique and specific issues for persons with disabilities in the review of the National Disaster Management Plan (2023-2030) and the relevant national legislation, such as the Disaster Management Act (2005), as well as policies and guidelines, including the disaster legislation under review to ensure they are disability inclusive;

(b) Strengthening the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, ensuring that anti-personnel mines are removed as soon as possible and developing systems that protect the rights of persons with disabilities who have been affected by landmines;

(c) Ensuring the full participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction and emergency planning;

(d) Ensuring that persons with disabilities, including internally displaced persons with disabilities, women and girls with disabilities, persons with disabilities belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, persons with disabilities still in institutions and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, have access to humanitarian aid on equal basis with others, including through adequate funding, and that related information and communication, including on protocols for evacuation in situations of risk, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, evacuation centres, emergency relief assistance, early warning systems, community needs assessments and assistive devices, as well as decision making processes, are accessible for persons with disabilities.

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

23. The Committee is concerned:

(a) That substitute decision-making regimes exist in legislation and practice, including through provisions of the Civil Procedure Code, the Mental Diseases Ordinance and family-law frameworks;

(b) That supported decision-making frameworks have not yet been established and that the legal capacity of persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities is not fully recognized on an equal basis with others.

24. **The Committee recommends that in line with its general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law, and in close consultation and the active**

[1] CRPD/C/5.

involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, the State party:

(a) Review the Mental Disease Ordinance (1873) and other relevant legislation to ensure that persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities are not deprived of their legal capacity on the basis of impairment and are recognised as persons before the law on equal basis with others, adopt national decision-making principles that ensure the provision of individualized support and respect for the autonomy, will and preferences of persons with disabilities and replace substitute decision-making systems, including guardianship, with supported decision-making;

(b) Develop awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building programmes for all stakeholders: families of persons with disabilities, faith-based groups, Indigenous leaders, community members and the media on the recognition of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities and supported decision-making;

(c) Provide training to health professionals, public officials, the judiciary and members of the Parliament on the recognition of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities, and the national decision-making principles including supported decision-making mechanisms.

Access to justice (art. 13)

25. The Committee is concerned the lack of access to justice for persons with disabilities, including the lack of physical access to police stations and court houses, the limitation of the resources to free legal advice services and age- and gender-appropriate procedural accommodations, the lack of accessible information and communication in the justice system, the lack of knowledge, training and awareness among lawyers, including legal aid lawyers, police officers and judiciary on working with and representing persons with disabilities, as well as the lack of knowledge among persons with disabilities about their rights and how to enforce their entitlements and processes to obtain remedies.

26. **The Committee recalls the International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities prepared in 2020 by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, and target 16.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and recommends that the State party:**

(a) Adopt an Action plan on access to justice for persons with disabilities, as well as necessary legislative, administrative and judicial measures and mechanisms to ensure procedural, age-appropriate and gender-sensitive accommodations in judicial and administrative proceedings for persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and persons with physical and sensory disabilities, and measures to provide information in accessible formats, and ensure the accessibility of police stations, court buildings and all judicial and administrative facilities for all persons with disabilities;

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

Liberty and security of the person (art. 14)

27. The Committee is concerned:

(a) That the Mental Diseases Ordinance authorizes deprivation of liberty on the basis of actual or perceived impairment;

(b) About reports of arbitrary security-related monitoring and restrictions experienced by persons with conflict-related disabilities and former combatants;

(c) About the lack of data on the number of persons with disabilities in detention and about the lack of information on measures taken to ensure adequate conditions of detention, including accessibility and reasonable accommodation.

28. **Recalling 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) Review its national legislation, in particular the Mental Diseases Ordinance to guarantee the constitutional right to liberty for all persons with disabilities including those with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;

(b) Accelerate the review of the monitoring mechanism to ensure that persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities are not subjected to arbitrary detention, and ensure that reasonable accommodation and safety is provided to persons with disabilities who come into conflict with the law;

(c) Collect and publish disaggregated data on persons with disabilities in all places of deprivation of liberty, including on sex, age, type of impairment, location and detention conditions.

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

29. The Committee is concerned about reports of restraint, seclusion, chaining and forced medication in institutional settings, as well as the lack of comprehensive information on mechanisms to prevent, investigate and remedy torture, ill-treatment and medical interventions without free and informed consent.

30. **Recalling its Guidelines on Deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies[2], the Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) Prohibit and end the use of physical and chemical restraints, seclusion and other restrictive practices in all residential institutions, including in penitentiaries, psychoneurological social services and psychiatric facilities;

(b) Monitor, investigate, document and remedy any allegations of the use of restrictive practices, as well as coercion or forced treatment of persons with disabilities, including in schools, medical facilities, in interactions with the police and at home;

(c) Establish a competent and effective legal complaint mechanism procedure with sufficient financial, human and technical resources accessible to all persons with disabilities and investigate and sanction perpetrators of practices that may amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment against persons with disabilities, including in police custody, imposing sanctions proportional to the conduct.

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

31. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About continuing risks of violence, abuse and exploitation, particularly affecting women and girls with disabilities, and the limited accessibility of protection, reporting and support systems;

(b) The reports of the social acceptance and continuing use of corporal punishment, despite the amendments to the Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code in 2025 to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings.

[2] CRPD/C/5.

32. **Recalling its statement of 25 November 2021 on the elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities[3], and targets 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Take all necessary steps to raise awareness about measures for the protection of persons with disabilities from exploitation, violence and abuse, and adopt a comprehensive strategy to prevent exploitation, violence and abuse of persons with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, including older women, persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and persons with disabilities who are confined to their family homes, and ensure that persons with disabilities have information about how to avoid, recognize and report cases and have access to independent complaint mechanisms and appropriate remedies, such as redress and adequate compensation, including rehabilitation;

(b) Strengthen the implementation of the amended Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code of 2025, to ban corporal punishment in all settings;

(c) Provide training for the families of persons with disabilities and for their support persons, church groups, health professionals and law enforcement officers to enable them to recognize all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse, and to better communicate and work with persons with disabilities who are victims of violence.

Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)

33. The Committee is concerned:

(a) That forced sterilization, forced contraception and other non-consensual interventions are not explicitly prohibited by law;

(b) About the lack of explicit safeguards ensuring the free and informed consent of persons with disabilities, particularly persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, in all medical, surgical and psychiatric interventions.

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

(a) Adopt and implement legislative and policy measures to ensure, in all situations, the protection of the integrity of persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and to ensure that medical interventions on and treatment of persons with disabilities are carried out only with their free and informed consent of the person concerned;

(b) Amend the national legislation to explicitly prohibit forced sterilization and forced contraception, in particular of women and girls with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, thoroughly investigate allegations of forced sterilization and forced contraception and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and that appropriate redress is provided to the victims and survivors;

(c) Establish an independent monitoring body to investigate cases of medical coercion, forced treatment and violation of bodily autonomy, ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to effective remedies and accountability mechanisms.

Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)

35. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About barriers faced by persons with disabilities in obtaining identity documents, civil registration documents and other documentation necessary to access public services;

(b) About the lack of comprehensive information regarding reasonable accommodation and support for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers with disabilities in migration and asylum procedures;

[3] See https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2021/12/CRPD-Statement-25_11_2021-End-violence-against-Women-1.pdf .

(c) About barriers affecting freedom of movement and access to services for persons with disabilities in conflict-affected areas, including barriers linked to displacement and inaccessible transport infrastructure.

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

(a) Increase its efforts to raise awareness among parents and the general public of the importance of birth registration for their children, including children with disabilities, and organize regular campaigns to issue birth certificates and identity documents, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations;

(b) Take appropriate measures to eliminate all obstacles that prevent persons with disabilities, including those living in remote and rural areas, from enjoying their rights to a nationality, birth registration and civil status documents, in order to enable them to exercise all the rights enshrined in the Convention;

(c) Put in place national programme measures to take account of the situation of migrant persons with disabilities, and persons with disabilities who are refugees and in refugee-like situations, and to provide them with the documents necessary to enable them to enjoy freedom of movement.

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

37. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About the reliance on institutional and segregated support arrangements, the majority of which are unregistered facilities, and the absence of a comprehensive, adequately funded and time-bound deinstitutionalization strategy;

(b) About the limited availability of personal assistance and community-based services and regional disparities in access to community-based support services, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas.

38. **The Committee recalls its general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community and the Committee's Guidelines on Deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies (2022) and recommends that the State party in close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations and development partners:**

(a) Develop a national deinstitutionalization strategy and guidelines on community based inclusive development and work with donors and development partners, faith-based organisations and community leaders to implement community based inclusive programs, taking into account persons with disabilities in the unregistered facilities, with an established timeframe and allocation of sufficient resources and ensure that community-based services are accessible and available and aimed to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate in the community;

(b) Work closely with families, community leaders and faith-based groups to raise awareness to promote understanding of the right of choice and self-determination of persons with disabilities concerning their living arrangements, the right not to be obliged to live in a particular living arrangement, and the value of inclusion in, as opposed to segregation from, the community;

(c) Transform mainstream services in the community including education, employment, health, leisure, cultural and social activities to be disability inclusive and accessible and provide personal assistants, across the State party, in particular in rural, remote and conflict-affected areas.

Personal mobility (art. 20)

39. The Committee is concerned about the limited availability and affordability of mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, including training for use, repairs and

maintenance, and the concentration of specialist mobility and prosthetic services in a limited number of locations.

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

(a) Take measures, including with relevant donors and development partners, to facilitate access for all persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, to quality mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies at an affordable cost, including training for the use, repair and maintenance of such devices and accessible transport;

(b) Expand mobility services and assistive technology support in underserved communities.

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

41. The Committee notes that the State party is currently developing legislation on sign language. However, it is concerned:

(a) That Sri Lankan Sign Language and Tamil Sign Language have not yet been legally recognized and that there is a shortage of qualified sign-language interpreters;

(b) About the insufficient provision of information in accessible and assistive formats including digital information and communications, such as Easy Read, plain language, captioning, sign language, Braille, audio description, and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication, in both public and private media outlets, and in particular on the websites that provide public information and services;

(c) About the limited access to information and communications technology devices by persons with disabilities.

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

(a) Speed up the adoption of legislation to legally recognize Sri Lankan Sign Language and Tamil Sign Language, and develop an adequately resourced pool of qualified sign language interpreters and teachers to teach and interpret sign language, including in rural and remote areas;

(b) Take all necessary measures, including legislative and policy measures, to ensure the accessibility of all public information, including digital content for all persons with disabilities in accessible and assistive formats such as Braille, deafblind interpretation, sign language, Easy Read, plain language, audio description, captioning and subtitles in education and beyond, by allocating adequate funding for its development, promotion and use, and ensure access to information and communications technology devices appropriate for the diversity of persons with disabilities, in particular in rural and remote areas;

(c) Adopt and implement legislative and policy measures aimed at ensuring that public and private websites are made accessible in line with the international accessibility standards and with strong enforcement mechanisms and penalties in case of violation.

Respect for privacy (art. 22)

43. The Committee is concerned about the absence of reference to persons with disabilities in the Personal Data Protection Act no.9 (2022), as well as about the absence of comprehensive disability-specific privacy safeguards relating to personal data and disability-related information, beyond that related to Telecommunications, as well as about reports that persons with disabilities may not have sufficient control over the collection, use and sharing of personal information relating to disability and health status, in particular in institutional and service settings.

44. **The Committee recommends that the State party develop a legal and policy framework on data protection for persons with disabilities to ensure their privacy, particularly for persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, by safeguarding information such as personal medical records held by institutions and**

within institutional and mental health systems and services, as well as information and records related to rehabilitation, employment, education, judicial procedures, financial matters, and ensure effective remedies and sanctions in cases of privacy violations.

Respect for home and the family (art. 23)

45. The Committee is concerned about continuing stigma and barriers in legislation affecting marriage, including those based on legal references to "unsound mind", in particular reports of marriages of persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities beings cancelled, family life and parenthood of persons with disabilities, lack of awareness and barriers in accessing sexual and reproductive health information and family planning in accessible formats, as well as the insufficient support available to parents with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities.

46. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, raise awareness in the community, in particular, faith-based groups on the rights of persons with disabilities with respect to sexual expression, choice of relationships, family and parenthood, including adoption, as well as about all forms of discrimination that might arise from traditional and cultural practices, and remove all obstacles preventing persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities, and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities to exercise their rights on an equal basis with others. It also recommends that the State party remove any restriction related to marriage and parental rights and related restrictions to legal capacity and develop a programme with adequate resources to provide family support to parents with disabilities.**

Education (art. 24)

47. The Committee is concerned:

(a) That many children with disabilities remain excluded from education and that segregated education through special schools and special education units continues to predominate;

(b) That school infrastructure, transportation, learning materials and communication remain insufficiently accessible, particularly for children with visual, hearing, intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;

(c) That reasonable accommodation is not consistently provided to meet Individual requirements and the denial of reasonable accommodation is not recognised as a form of discrimination and that there remains a shortage of qualified teachers in inclusive education, sign language instructors, educational assistants and accessible educational materials, including Braille, audio and Easy Read formats;

(d) That children with disabilities living in conflict-affected areas continue to face additional barriers to access education on equal basis with others, arising from displacement, poverty, trauma, family separation, explosive remnants of war and inadequate access to educational and psychosocial support services.

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

(a) Adopt a national policy with timelines on inclusive quality education, that includes the transition from special schools to inclusive, quality mainstream education and ensure that inclusive quality education covers all children with disabilities, regardless of their type of disability, throughout the country including in the rural and remote areas and monitor the evolution of educational attainments of students with disabilities;

(b) Provide students with disabilities with assistive aids and learning materials in accessible formats, such as accessible digital access, as well as modes and

means of accessible and assistive communication, including Braille, sign language and deafblind interpretation, and Easy Read and remove other practical barriers such as lack of accessible transport;

(c) Guarantee that reasonable accommodation to meet individual requirements is consistently and adequately provided and the denial of reasonable accommodation is recognised as a form of discrimination and strengthen the recruitment, training and retention of teachers, sign-language instructors and other educational personnel with competencies in inclusive education and universal design for learning;

(d) Adopt targeted measures to ensure that children with disabilities in conflict-affected areas have access to inclusive education, rehabilitation, psychosocial support and other services on an equal basis with others, including support for children affected by displacement, poverty, family separation and explosive remnants of war.

Health (art. 25)

49. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About barriers affecting access to healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health services, particularly for women and girls with disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, as well as about the discrimination of persons with disabilities in private insurances;

(b) About the lack of standardized disability assessments and referral systems to access health services on equal basis with others;

(c) About shortages of accessible information, sign-language interpretation and assistive services in healthcare settings and shortage of professionals trained on the rights of persons with disabilities.

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

(a) Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to affordable, accessible and quality health services on an equal basis as others, amend the national legislation and policies in order to prohibit discrimination in private insurance, and expand disability-inclusive healthcare services and referral mechanisms;

(b) Provide persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities, with access to sexual and reproductive health care and services, including to sensitization and awareness-raising on HIV/AIDS, and ensure access for persons with psychosocial disabilities to health services, including mental health services on equal basis with others;

(c) Develop a compulsory training for health-care professionals on the rights of persons with disabilities, including on their skills, support measures, free and informed consent and information and communication means and methods, and provide information in accessible digital formats, as well as Braille, sign language and Easy Read, for persons with disabilities, particularly persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and women and girls with disabilities, including ensuring the physical accessibility of health facilities and equipment.

Habilitation and rehabilitation (art. 26)

51. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About insufficient rehabilitation centres, rehabilitation professionals and community-based rehabilitation services, in particular in rural and remote areas, and the State party's reliance on civil society organizations to fill rehabilitation service gaps;

(b) About inadequate rehabilitation support for mine survivors and persons with conflict-related disabilities.

52. **Recalling the link between article 26 of the Convention and target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Develop a national rehabilitation strategy with adequate resources, based on the human rights model of disability beyond the National Health Strategic Master plan 2016-2025, and expand community-based rehabilitation services and outreach;

(b) Ensure rehabilitation and reintegration support for mine survivors and persons with conflict-related disabilities including the provision of assistive technology.

Work and employment (art. 27)

53. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) About the low levels of employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, the limited measures in place to facilitate their access to employment, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation in the workplace, the lack of inclusive vocational training opportunities and the barriers created by stigmatization and inaccessible workplaces as well as the insufficient monitoring of the employment gaps between persons with and without disabilities;

(b) About the lack of implementation of employment quotas and inclusive employment measures;

(c) About barriers faced by persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and conflict-related disabilities in accessing employment.

54. **Recalling its general comment No.8 (2022) on the right of persons with disabilities to work and employment, the Committee recommends that the State party, in line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals:**

(a) Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to work and employment in the open labour market and are included in private and public work environments, on an equal basis with others, and introduce entrepreneurial programmes and development schemes for the creation of opportunities of self-employment and entrepreneurship;

(b) Adopt legislation on the protection from discrimination in employment beyond recruitment, ensuring that it includes the obligation of providing reasonable accommodation and that protects from discrimination in all stages of employment, and strengthen enforcement of employment quotas and non-discrimination obligations with dissuasive penalties;

(c) Ensure support and technical and vocational training programmes for persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities through the livelihood programs, including in rural and remote areas, persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and conflict-related disabilities on equal basis with persons without disabilities.

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

55. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The disproportionately high risk of poverty among persons with disabilities and the insufficient support for disability-related expenses to ensure an adequate standard of living and that disability benefits are inadequate to meet disability-related costs;

(b) About inadequate access to housing support, accessible housing and sanitation facilities for persons with disabilities.

56. **Recalling the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to empower and to promote the economic inclusion of all persons, irrespective of disability status, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) In close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations, review the national social protection

programme that target costs associated to disability in the community and away from institutionalised support including for persons with psychosocial disabilities;

(b) Ensure access to accessible housing and disability-related support services for persons with disabilities in the community and at home.

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

57. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) At the limited participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life, in particular at the decision-making level and the existing discriminatory provisions restricting the participation of persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities in political and public life, including provisions referring to the removal of persons with disabilities from the political office and public administrations due to "ill health or physical and mental infirmity or unsound mind", as well as at the inaccessibility of many polling stations and elections processes;

(b) That there are no women with disabilities in the National Commission on Women established by the Women Empowerment Act No. 37 (2024).

58. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representatives organizations, particularly from rural and conflict-affected regions:**

(a) Remove Constitutional and other legal provisions restricting right to vote or appointments of persons with disabilities, and promote the participation of persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, in political and public life and in public administration and facilitate an environment for them to hold public office and perform public functions at all levels, by ensuring accessibility, providing assistive devices and personal assistance;

(b) Adopt specific steps to increase the participation and effective representation of women with disabilities in political and public decision-making positions, including in the National Commission on Women.

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

59. The Committee is concerned:

(a) About the absence of accessible tourism and recreation and cultural facilities and disability inclusive and accessible sports opportunities in many regions of the State party;

(b) At the lack of measures taken to implement the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.

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

(a) Ensure that all public buildings, including cultural, recreation, leisure, tourist and sporting facilities provide for accessibility and provide reasonable accommodations, to facilitate private and independent enjoyment of the right of persons with disabilities to cultural life, recreation, leisure and sports, throughout the State party;

(b) Take measures to implement the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

61. The Committee notes with appreciation the inclusion of the Washington Group Short Set in the Census of Population and Housing and other surveys. However, it is concerned:

(a) About fragmented disability data systems across sectors and the absence of a consolidated disability data management system;

(b) About inconsistencies in disability classification, inadequate disability-disaggregated data across sectors and the exclusion of some groups of persons with disabilities from disability-related planning;

(c) About limited participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in data collection and monitoring processes.

62. **The Committee recommends that the State party adhere to the Convention in its efforts to achieve Goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 17.18, and significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, and in particular:**

(a) Establish a unified disability data management system, and continue to incorporate the Washington Group short set of questions into data collection measures, censuses and surveys are disability inclusive and incorporate, and provide training and capacity building to statistical officers;

(b) Closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in its efforts to increase the collection of data and statistics on disability in all sectors;

(c) Publish data in accessible formats and disseminate data across ministries, for development partners and for persons with disability and their representative organisations, and ensure that such data is available in Braille, sign language, Easy Read and electronic formats.

International cooperation (art. 32)

63. The Committee notes the ongoing cooperation with international organizations but is concerned that disability inclusion is not systematically mainstreamed across all international development and recovery programmes. It also notes the need to strengthen regional awareness of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2023–2032), its operational guide and other regional disability standards.

64. **The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations, ensure that all international cooperation, development and poverty-reduction programmes are in line with the Convention. It also recommends that the State party 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.**

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

65. The Committee notes with appreciation the reaccreditation of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka with A status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in March 2024, reversing the downgrade of the Commission to B status in October 2022. However, the Committee is concerned about the need to further strengthen the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, as recommended by the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

66. **The Committee recommends that the State Party implement the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions to strengthen the independence of the Human**

Rights Commission of Sri Lanka and provide it with adequate human, technical and financial resources to be able to carry out its mandate effectively and independently, in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), and seek the advice and technical support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in that regard.

67. The Committee is concerned that the National Council for Persons with Disabilities lacks adequate resources to implement its mandate. It also concerned at the absence of a functional inter-ministerial coordination mechanism dedicated to disability rights.

68. **The Committee recommends that the State party provide sufficient human, financial and technical resources to the National Council for Persons with Disabilities to enable it carry out its mandate for ensuring that rights of persons with disabilities are mainstreamed across all policies and programmes. It also recommends that the State party establish a formal coordination mechanism on the rights of persons with disabilities that extends across national, provincial, and local levels.**

IV. Follow-up

Dissemination of information

69. **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 para. 6(b) on general principles and obligations (arts.1-4), para. 48(a) on education and para. 56(a) on social protection of the Convention.**

70. **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.**

71. **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.**

72. **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

73. **The combined second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth reports are due in principle on 8 March 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 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 its submission.**