



ITALY

**7TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO
THE CONVENTION ON THE
RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**STATEMENT BY
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Madam/Mister Chairperson,

Italy aligns itself with the comprehensive statement made by the European Union and wishes to add a few remarks in a national capacity on the protection and promotion of the rights of **persons with disabilities and on Italy's endeavors** with regard to the themes on the agenda of this relevant meeting.

There can be no inclusive society or international sustainable development without the **empowerment** of persons with disabilities. Promoting their full and active participation in the economic, social and cultural development of societies is not only a moral imperative - it is also a smart choice. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the cornerstone of all actions provided for and with disabled persons. I would like to share some insights from our national experience.

When Italy ratified the Convention in 2009, it established a **National Observatory** on the status of persons with disabilities. The Observatory, overseen by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, consists of members of national and regional public administrations, as well as of representatives of the social parties and the national federations of persons with disabilities.

It was created also in fulfillment of the Convention's function of providing monitoring, coordination between administrations, and sharing policy priorities with representatives of persons with disabilities, guaranteeing the inclusiveness of its work.

In terms of monitoring, the Observatory prepared the first **Report** on the implementation of the Convention, which was submitted to the United Nations in November 2012. At the national level, Italy adopted in December 2013 its **Biennial Action Plan** for the promotion of the rights and the integration of persons with disabilities, centering directly on some of the main areas of the UNCRPD, i.e., education, accessibility, independent living, health, and employment. It is consistent with the 2010-2020 European Strategy on Disability and the 2006-2015 Council of Europe Plan of Action on Disability.

There was broad participation in the drafting of both documents, including, first and foremost, associations for the disabled, who were actively involved in the whole process. The Observatory's working groups,

also in cooperation with representatives of the national federations of persons with disabilities, played a key role. The Observatory assured the equal participation of members of the national, regional, and local public administrations, as well as representatives of labor unions, social parties, and associations of disabled persons, in full compliance with a core precept of the Convention: nothing about us without us.

The same approach characterized the work of **Italian Development Cooperation (IDC)**.

In 2010, IDC issued its **Guidelines on Disability** and since 2011 it has been working together with civil society, local government institutions, other decentralized bodies, academia, and research centers, to draft the “**Italian Development Disability Action Plan.**”

The Action Plan was finally adopted in June 2013 and it was included among the actions to be implemented within the **Biennial Action Plan** adopted by the Italian National Observatory on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

The Action Plan lays its foundation on 5 pillars:

1. Policies and strategies. National disability policy planning and monitoring tools
2. Inclusive project planning & design
3. Accessible and usable environments, goods and services
4. Humanitarian aid and emergency situations including persons with disabilities
5. Making the most of the experiences and best practices developed by civil society and private sector actors in the area of disability

On May, 26th the IDC Action Plan was presented in Brussels with the aim of promoting information exchange and sharing experience among the EU in the field of inclusive development, also in the framework of the international debate on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Italy believes special attention should be given to disability and all related rights and protection mechanisms.

Madam/Mister Chairperson,

Italy is committed to working incessantly to foster cooperation between the various social and economic stakeholders so that persons with disabilities can enjoy the same rights as all citizens, on an equal basis and in application of the general principles of equal opportunities for all.

The goal is twofold: to ensure that development can benefit persons with disabilities, and to guarantee that persons with disabilities can contribute to the development of society.

Thank you, Madam/Mister Chairperson.