

July 5th, 2021

STATEMENT

47TH session of the Human Rights Council
Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women
Panel 1: Violence against women and girls with disabilities

Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Working Group on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (GANHRI WG RPD), thank you for the opportunity to address the panel.

Women and girls with disabilities continue to experience significant inequities and discrimination in all areas of life despite the rights guaranteed in the UN CRPD (including Articles 5 and 6 on Equality and non-discrimination and women with disabilities). Other human rights instruments, in particular CEDAW, CRC, and UNDRIP Regional instruments – also pay attention to women and girls with disabilities. The OPDs have been instrumental in pushing for better implementation of rights, but progress is not even, and at crisis times such as the pandemic, there is even regression.

The monitoring carried out by NHRIs, gender equality bodies and DPOs reveal patterns of discrimination and rights violations across the globe. Women and girls with disabilities are at even higher risk of being deprived of protection of their rights. They are often living in poverty and exclusion and face gender-based violence more often than others. There are alarming reports which show that violence against women has increased by the Covid-19 pandemic and that women and girls with disabilities are amongst the most vulnerable. This is often due to their poor socio-economic status, lack of accessible information and services for victims of violence, which have become less available during the pandemic. Women with disabilities are often without a voice and power to act when faced with abuse and violence, especially when living in institutions and not independently.

Different forms of violence, abuse and neglect facing women and girls with disabilities require tailored, inclusive and accessible measures. They themselves must be at the forefront of

developing these measures as they have the lived experiences and know the realities and needs.

As national human rights institutions, with a broad human rights mandate and functions, we call on States in close partnerships with persons with disabilities and with disability organisations to:

- Facilitate the meaningful involvement of women and girls with disabilities throughout the cycle of responses to gender-based violence from prevention to protection of victims, to ensuring access to justice, providing remedy and reparations and combating impunity.
- Ensure that all measures taken are comprehensive and intersectional in approach and inclusive of the diverse needs of all women and girls with disabilities facing violence, abuse and neglect.
- Ensure access to safety and services and maintain continuity of essential support with sufficient resources.
- Ensure that information and communication is in accessible formats and easily available to women and girl victims of abuse and violence.

We, as global human rights community must ensure the safety of all persons with disabilities and in particular women and girls facing abuse and violence. The women and girls need to be empowered to claim their rights and to live in safety and dignity, equally with others and in accordance with the UN CRPD.

Sirpa Rautio, Director

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