

**Statement from the Canadian Human Rights Commission on behalf of  
GANHRI Working Group on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

on the occasion of the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council  
for its annual debate on the rights of persons with disabilities

*(to be delivered orally)*

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**March 13, 2023**

“The Canadian Human Rights Commission on behalf of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions Working Group on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,<sup>1</sup> thank you for this opportunity to participate in this timely annual debate.

We welcome the recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, which focuses on the transformation of services for persons with disabilities. We particularly welcome the recognition of the importance of ensuring that people with disabilities are able to live independently and with dignity in the community, in accordance with article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention).

Transforming disability supports is linked to the broader social transformation required to eradicate ableist assumptions that diminish the lives of people with disabilities. As noted by the Special Rapporteur, people with disabilities are still too often treated as passive recipients of care. Services that are not disability-inclusive can further exclude people from participating in decisions about their lives, leading to a loss of autonomy. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that even when transformation has begun, in times of crisis, institutional thinking and control can rapidly re-emerge. Access to inclusive supports and services are essential for people with disabilities to claim back agency and to meaningfully participate in society, with choices equal to others.

We therefore support the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur in his report, and call on States – in close partnership with people with disabilities, organizations that advocate on their behalf, and families and caregivers of people with disabilities – to:

- Counter ableist attitudes and practices by embedding in law people with disabilities as rights holders entitled to full participation as citizens;
- Ensure access to inclusive, equitable, adequate and culturally relevant supports and services;
- Ensure that people with disabilities are fully included in the design and delivery of services, including by ensuring that these services consider the intersectional identities and diverse needs and preferences of people with disabilities;
- Invest in human rights education, peer support and material support for people with disabilities, their families and caregivers, and build opportunity and capacity to shape and oversee transformation.

While we recognize that much progress remains to be made, we are hopeful that a transformation of services that puts the rights of people with disabilities in the center will help contribute to real change in the lives of people with disabilities around the globe.”

**Tabatha Tranquilla**

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<sup>1</sup> The Working Group members are from the NHRIs of Canada, El Salvador, Finland, Georgia, New Zealand, Philippines, Kenya and South Africa.

Deputy Chair, GANHRI Working Group on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities