



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**Statement by Ambassador Andreas Hadjichrysanthou, Permanent  
Representative of the Republic of Cyprus, to the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the State  
Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
New York, 14 June 2022**

Thank you, Mister President,

Cyprus aligns itself with the statement [to be] delivered by the European Union. I would like to make the following additional remarks in my national capacity.

As one of the most vulnerable and marginalized social groups, persons with disabilities continue to be at risk of exclusion, facing barriers to full and effective participation across all sectors of society. The experience of the pandemic shows us that additional drastic measures and reforms are required in all areas of life of persons with disabilities, especially in areas of assistive technology, work and employment and risk situations, which will be discussed during this Conference.

Following the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2011, the Republic of Cyprus adopted its National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities and implements three-yearly National Disability Action Plans, defining the vision, values, strategic goals and actions for the fulfilment of the rights of citizens with disabilities, in all areas of their lives.

Our Disability Strategy and Action Plans take into account both the concluding observations made to the Republic of Cyprus by the UN Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2017, as well as views and suggestions made by organisations representing persons with disabilities.

Among others, Cyprus implements the following actions, aiming at improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities:

- (a) The provision of new social services in the community to support the independent living of persons with an intellectual disability or autism.
- (b) The adoption of a new law for the creation of social enterprises and the design of tools and mechanisms to support persons with disabilities to become employees or owners of social enterprises in the open labour market.
- (c) The expansion of the provision of rehabilitation services through the national health system in order to enhance early intervention for children with disabilities or rehabilitation interventions for all.
- (d) Improvement measures in accessibility to beach facilities, archaeological sites and museums, public websites, public transportation and public buildings.
- (e) The preparation of a new law to substitute existing legislation on special education towards a modern education system for all students.

Article 27 of the Convention affirms the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others, including in a work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. In order to support their access to employment in the open labour market, Cyprus has put in place a series of measures: firstly, specially trained Employment Counsellors of the Department of Labour give priority to persons with disabilities in interviews for vacant posts and run schemes financed by the European Social Fund which offer incentives to employers in the private sector to recruit persons with disabilities. Additional programmes also include the subsidization of small units for self-employment, the subsidization of supported employment programs and a quota system for employment in the wider public sector. Furthermore, the Cyprus Government is promoting an initiative for a new legal framework for social enterprises on a horizontal basis for all vulnerable groups.

In the technology field, the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities implements the Scheme for the provision of Financial Assistance to Persons with Disabilities for the Supply of Technical Means, Instruments and other aids, under which they have the opportunity to buy equipment (such as computers, computer software, cell phones, communication devices, closed-circuit TVs, and other assistive technology and equipment) which can facilitate their lives either at home or at work.

Cyprus is in favour of further measures and reforms being undertaken, as well as cooperation between States, in order to expand its actions for the achievement of the full and equal enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities and the realization to the fullest extent possible of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.