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**11th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 12 - 14 June 2018, UNHQs, New York**

***Leaving no one behind through the full implementation of the CRPD***

**General Debate, 12 June 2018**

**H.E. Ms. Rositsa Dimitrova, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy of Bulgaria**

**Mr. President,**

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Bulgaria is strongly committed to the rights of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in society on an equal basis with others. Bulgarian legislation provides legal guarantees of non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all.

The National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities integrates the principles of the CRPD with the recommendations of the Council of Europe and the legislation of the EU. All national policies and programmes related to the implementation of the CRPD follow a human rights-based approach and are developed in close consultation with persons with disabilities.

Aligning national legislation to the principles and provisions of the CRPD is a continuous process and for ensuring its success the Bulgarian Government actively engages persons with disabilities as equal partners in every stage - from the designing of measures through their adoption, implementation and monitoring. The National Council for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities under the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria includes organizations of persons with disabilities and civil society representatives.

The Bulgarian Government is constantly upgrading the relevant legislation for further strengthening the implementation of the CRPD. The Government Programme for 2017 - 2021 sets a goal to develop a new Law on the Integration of Persons with Disabilities. A new Law on Social Services is being currently developed which will establish an innovative model of financing and enhance the quality, effectiveness, management and monitoring of social services. New legislation is being prepared also in relation to CRPD Article 21 on freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information, which includes a provision for the introduction of Bulgarian sign language.

The second Action Plan of Bulgaria for the implementation of the CRPD covering the period till 2020 envisages legislative measures for the full implementation of all articles of the Convention.

As President of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD in 2017 - 2018 Bulgaria has been actively involving persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all aspects of the preparation of the Conference thus ensuring their equal participation in the implementation of the Convention at global level as well. We are confident that only when we join efforts with the disability community and learn from their experience and knowledge can we fully implement the Convention.

**Mr. President,**

Bulgaria highlights the importance of ensuring the effective participation of persons with disabilities in all development efforts as well. Strengthening the implementation of the CRPD and creating the necessary conditions for the realization of all human rights for persons with disabilities is instrumental for achieving the bold ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development *to leave no one behind* which can be operationalized only through the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of public life.

**Thank you, Mr. President!**