

Closing Statement-Mr Elisha RAM, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Income Security and Social Development Branch, Employment and Social Development Canada

Canada's appearance before the United Nations

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

closing Remarks for the Head of Delegation

Draft

Introduction

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, Canada is honoured to mark the 15th anniversary of Canada's ratification of the Convention today with the conclusion of our constructive and meaningful exchange.

Over the past two days, we have had the opportunity to share the key milestones undertaken by Canada towards our commitments, as well as our remaining challenges, to upholding, protecting, and defending the human rights of persons with disabilities, set out in the Convention.

We are grateful for the collaboration and participation of all federal departments, our provincial and territorial partners, as well as the contributions of the rights holders, Indigenous Peoples, representative organizations and various stakeholders and human rights institutions. Your work is appreciated.

Over the course of the past two days, Canada has welcomed the opportunity to illustrate our long-standing commitment to advancing equality and inclusion and protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.

This work is founded on the participation and engagement of the disability community, in line with the principle of "Nothing Without Us"; as well as the collaborative approach that underpins Canada's federal system.

In the years since our last appearance, Canada has collectively made big strides in ensuring a more inclusive and accessible country for all Canadians. In 2018, Canada proudly acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention. We established groundbreaking legislation, with the Accessible Canada Act. Building on that, we launched Canada's first-ever Disability Inclusion Action Plan, the National Autism Strategy, and the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, to name a few.

Despite these advancements, we also recognize there is much more work to do, in particular with respect to the disproportionate rates of poverty, higher unemployment, and housing issues faced by persons with disabilities.

Key Messages

Canada places significant value on the contributions of persons with lived experience to all aspects of society and will continue to actively engage persons with disabilities and their representative organizations on the development and implementation of policies, programs and legislation.

Systemic inequities continue to disproportionately impact specific groups, such as Indigenous persons with disabilities, women with disabilities, black Canadians with disabilities and racialized individuals. To address these ongoing issues, Canada will continue to apply and enhance its intersectional approach to program and policy design, as well as engagement efforts.

Canada continues to work collaboratively across all orders of government, and with a distinctions-based approach, to ensure Indigenous Peoples with disabilities in Canada will be better able to enjoy their economic, social, and cultural rights.

Canada recognizes the importance of disaggregated data to ensure persons with disabilities are accurately reflected in programs and services. As such, work is underway to update the disability indicators in the Disability Data Strategy.

Canada also continues to work on the issue of supported decision-making, with a view to furthering the practical implementation of Article 12 within Canada.

The Government of Canada has enhanced its inclusive employment model and procurement policies, and established mechanisms to share lessons learned and best practices for the public and private sectors.

The Government of Canada is committed to mainstreaming discussions on disability inclusion in all that we do, both at the domestic and international levels. Canada continues to be a strong voice, advocate and supporter of mainstreaming disability considerations in the work of the international fora within which it participates.

Closing

Madame President and members of the Committee, as the Head of Delegation for Canada, I again express our appreciation for the opportunity to share our progress with you and we are grateful to have received your thoughtful and thorough feedback. We look forward to receiving the Committee's concluding observations, which will help us further reflect on how we can continue to improve our implementation of the Convention.