

CHINA

Miscellaneous Statements

CRPD, A/66/55 (2011)

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Chapter II. Organizational and Other Matters

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J. Statements of the Committee

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34. In April 2010, the Committee adopted a statement on the earthquake and tsunami in Chile and persons with disability and a statement on the earthquake in Qinghai, China. The statements are contained in annexes XII and XIII to the present report.

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Annex XIII

Statement of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in connection with the earthquake in Qinghai, China

23 April 2010

1. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expresses its deepest sympathy and solidarity to the government and people of China affected by the devastating earthquake of 14 April 2010 in Qinghai, China. The Committee notes that Qinghai Province is a mountainous area mostly inhabited by members of the Tibetan ethnic minority of China.

2. The earthquake which hit Qinghai, China, has caused untold suffering, tremendous hardship, injury and loss of life among the general population, as well as incalculable material damage. Whilst relief workers are struggling to provide aid to the people in the affected areas of China and whilst the situation remains difficult for everyone, persons with disabilities are particularly affected by the crisis.

3. Considering that China is a State party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee notes that, under article 11 of the Convention, States parties should take, “in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety

of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters”.

4. Given the specific environment in which the humanitarian crisis is unfolding, the Committee urges the Government of China to ensure the delivery of urgent humanitarian aid. The needs of the most vulnerable should be considered, including women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. This earthquake has created an emergency situation which necessitates immediate rescue efforts to save lives and to prevent victims from becoming persons with disabilities. These rescue efforts must include the provision of medical support and related assistance to meet the basic needs of those in distress with food, water, clothing, temporary shelter and basic sanitation.

5. While recognizing the efforts of the Government of China in this emergency situation, the Committee recommends that relief measures also take into consideration the special needs of persons with different forms of disabilities. It is essential that warning procedures, evacuation instructions, other related information and general communications are made in the languages spoken in the region. It is also essential that, in accordance with article 21 of the Convention, all “information intended for the general public” be made available in “accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities”, including “sign languages, Braille, augmentative communication”, including video captioning and all other accessible means of communication.

6. The Committee calls on the international community as a whole to assist China to overcome this natural disaster.