

HAITI

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

33. In February 2010, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted a statement on the situation in Haiti. The statement is contained in annex XI to the present report.

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Annex XI

Statement of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the situation in Haiti

8 February 2010

1. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expresses its deepest sympathy and solidarity to the Government and people of Haiti affected by the devastating earthquake of 12 January 2010. The Committee also extends its condolences to the families of United Nations staff as well as all unknown and known persons with disabilities who perished in the earthquake.
2. The earthquake which hit one of the poorest countries in the world has caused tremendous hardship, injury and loss of life among the general population. Whilst relief workers are struggling to provide aid to the people of Haiti and whilst the situation remains difficult for everyone, persons with disabilities are particularly affected by the crisis. The Committee recalls that, under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, States are to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, and natural disaster like the occurrence of this earthquake, and therefore a disability perspective should be included in all humanitarian relief efforts to meet the needs of the disabled.
3. Given the specific environment in which the humanitarian crisis is unfolding, the Committee urges that the disabled, elderly and other vulnerable groups such as women and children in the community be given preferential access to food distribution, and proper sanitation facilities. The Committee is indeed concerned by the prospect of epidemics caused by overcrowding and poor sanitation and also by the lack of law and order in the earthquake-affected areas, and urges Haiti

authorities and the international community providing sustained support to it to prevent the spread of diseases and improve security for the most vulnerable people in the affected communities. The trauma caused by this disaster cannot be underestimated. The Committee stresses that it is important to address the specific needs of persons with disabilities in health care and rehabilitation services.

4. The Committee extends its appreciation to the international community which stands united in its resolve to help Haiti overcome this natural disaster. As the social and economic reconstruction of Haiti is about to begin, the Committee urges Haiti to ensure that persons with disabilities fully participate in the decision-making process and that sustained efforts be centred on the long-term development needs of disabled persons in Haiti.