



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

General comment No. 11 (2026) on the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life*

I. Introduction

1. Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities guarantees persons with disabilities the right to full and effective participation in political and public life on an equal basis with others and must be interpreted in light of the Convention as a whole, including the principles enshrined therein. The right to participate in political and public life is neither a discretionary benefit nor a matter of policy preference but gives concrete expression to the status of persons with disabilities as autonomous rights holders whose legal capacity and dignity must be fully acknowledged, respected and secured in the organization, functioning and oversight of public institutions. Beyond access to institutional processes, formal eligibility or procedural inclusion, participation affirms equal standing in political and public life and must be understood as effective involvement in public affairs and decision-making processes on an equal basis with others, contributing to the legitimacy, accountability and inclusiveness of public institutions.

2. The right to participate in political and public life is firmly anchored in international human rights law, as enshrined in article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed, in article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Human Rights Council has affirmed the applicability of these guarantees to persons with disabilities, recognizing that the exclusion or restriction of political rights on the basis of disability constitutes discrimination and calling upon States to take all appropriate measures to ensure their full and effective participation in political and public life on an equal basis with others.¹ The General Assembly has further underscored this principle, reaffirming the importance of promoting and ensuring such participation and removing barriers to its realization.²

3. Significant gaps persist between the recognition of the right to participate in political and public life and its effective enjoyment. In numerous jurisdictions, the denial or limitation of legal capacity, inaccessible procedures, environments, information and communication, absence of national sign languages, denial of reasonable accommodation, and structural and attitudinal barriers, often normalized within administrative and electoral systems, continue to restrict its recognition and exercise.

4. Exclusion is often maintained not through express prohibitions but through the cumulative effect of fragmented legal and electoral frameworks and inaccessible administrative and digital systems, insufficient safeguards and weak enforcement, so that participation is not secured as a matter of right but remains dependent upon individual

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¹ Human Rights Council resolution 19/11, “Rights of persons with disabilities: participation in political and public life”, A/HRC/RES/19/11, sixth preambular paragraph and paras. 4, 5 (b) and 7.

² A/RES/78/208, paras. 10 and 24.



initiative, informal support or discretionary measures. The Committee emphasizes that socio-economic disadvantages, including poverty, unemployment, limited mobility, institutionalization, linguistic barriers and digital exclusion, frequently compound structural inaccessibility, undermining the effective exercise of political rights.

5. The barriers restricting the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life frequently intersect with other prohibited grounds of discrimination, generating compounded, intersectional and structurally entrenched forms of exclusion inconsistent with article 5 of the Convention (equality and non-discrimination). These patterns of discrimination may disproportionately affect, *inter alia*, women with disabilities, children and young persons with disabilities, older persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or gender-diverse, indigenous persons, persons belonging to racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic minorities, migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons. Compounded barriers may also affect persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, persons requiring more intensive support, persons with deafblindness, and persons with disabilities living in remote communities, in poverty, in situations of armed conflict or other situations of violence, or persons that continue to live in institutional, congregated or segregated settings pending deinstitutionalization processes. States parties must ensure that the implementation of articles 5 and 29 systematically addresses compounded patterns of marginalization and discrimination through appropriate, effective and sustained measures capable of dismantling structural exclusion and securing the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in law and in practice.³

6. Disability-based restrictions on political rights, including those arising from the denial or limitation of legal capacity, as well as broader legislative and electoral frameworks directly or indirectly depriving persons with disabilities of their right to participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, are incompatible with the Convention, constitute discrimination^{4 5} and require the repeal of all laws and practices restricting the right to vote, to stand for election or to hold public office on the basis of disability. The Committee has underscored the collective dimension of political participation, emphasizing that the close consultation and active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities, as elaborated in general comment No. 7, is an essential component of compliance with article 29 and a structural condition for its effective implementation.⁶

7. While political participation is affirmed in constitutional or statutory terms, implementation continues to be pursued through dispersed measures, fragmented mandates and sectoral approaches. Such fragmentation fails to embed article 29 within integrated governance reforms aligned with the Convention, including through consistent coordination across institutions, the systematic mainstreaming of disability-inclusive requirements into ordinary rule-making and administrative practice, the close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations, and the establishment of enforceable standards accompanied by clear lines of responsibility.

8. The Committee recognizes that the participation of persons with disabilities, including through their representative organizations, brings knowledge and expertise derived from lived experience essential to identifying barriers, addressing discrimination, improving the organization and functioning of public affairs and contributing to more inclusive, representative and responsive public decision-making processes. States parties must therefore recognize and promote the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life not only as a legal obligation under article 29 but as an essential component of societies grounded in equality and human dignity.

³ CRPD/C/GC/6 para. 11.

⁴ CRPD/C/10/D/4/2011.

⁵ CRPD/C/HUN/CO/1, paras. 45-46; CRPD/C/ESP/CO/1, paras. 47-48; CRPD/C/EST/CO/1, paras. 56-57.

⁶ CRPD/C/GC/7.

II. Purpose and scope of the present general comment

9. The general comment clarifies the normative content and scope of article 29 within the Convention, and the corresponding obligations of States parties to respect, protect and fulfill it in law, policy and practice.

III. Human rights model of disability

10. The Convention constitutes a decisive normative transformation from medical, paternalistic and protection-based conceptions of disability to the human rights model under which persons with disabilities are recognized as rights holders entitled to political rights on an equal basis with others. Notwithstanding this paradigm shift, the Committee continues to observe that ableist assumptions and approaches remain embedded, expressly or implicitly, in legislative and institutional frameworks in numerous jurisdictions. Rooted in stereotypes and prejudices devaluing persons with disabilities or presuming them less capable of exercising rights on an equal basis with others, ableism sustains conceptions of disability incompatible with the Convention and contributes to the denial or undue restriction of the equal right of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life. Judicial and administrative institutions conditioning the exercise of political rights upon assessments of functional capacity, legal status or perceived civic competence related to actual or perceived impairments constitute disability-based discrimination and are incompatible with articles 5, 12 and 29 of the Convention. As clarified in general comments Nos. 6 and 1, such regimes deprive persons with disabilities of political rights and subordinate participation to criteria incompatible with equality, autonomy and inherent dignity. The exclusion of persons with disabilities from electoral processes through guardianship arrangements, institutionalization, substituted decision-making regimes or structurally inaccessible procedures cannot therefore be regarded as legitimate regulation of political rights but as structural discrimination rooted in ableist assumptions and stereotypes. The interpretation of articles 5 and 12 must therefore be consistent with general comment No. 6 on equality and non-discrimination and general comment No. 1 on equal recognition before the law.

11. The interpretation and implementation of article 29 must be unequivocally guided by the human rights model of disability, requiring States parties to ensure the full recognition of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, in accordance with article 12. Political participation must be secured as a matter of right and must neither directly nor indirectly be conditioned upon assessments of capacity, legal status related to actual or perceived impairments, or any other impairment-based criteria, while legislative, procedural, environmental, economic and attitudinal barriers impeding participation must be systematically dismantled. This obligation encompasses, inter alia, the repeal of disability-based restrictions on voting, candidacy or holding of public office, including those arising through guardianship or substituted decision-making regimes, the proactive and sustained integration of accessibility and reasonable accommodation throughout the electoral cycle, and the design and oversight of electoral and governance systems to guarantee full and effective participation on an equal basis with others. Inclusive equality, as elaborated in the Committee's jurisprudence, informs and shapes this interpretation of article 29 by requiring not only the removal of formal restrictions but also conditions enabling effective and meaningful participation capable of influencing decision-making processes, thereby precluding tokenistic forms of participation. Electoral systems, public institutions and decision-making frameworks must therefore be designed, implemented and monitored in conformity with the Convention and in close consultation with, and with the active involvement of, persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, as elaborated in general comment No. 7.

IV. Normative content of article 29

12. Article 29 must be interpreted in light of article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which protect participation in public affairs, the rights to vote and to be elected, and equal

access to public service. As clarified by the Human Rights Committee in its general comment No. 25, the conduct of public affairs is a broad concept encompassing the exercise of political power through legislative, executive and administrative institutions and covering all aspects of public administration and the formulation and implementation of policy at international, national, regional and local levels. Any conditions applicable to the exercise of these rights must be based on objective and reasonable criteria. Article 5 (c) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women further guarantee equality in political and public life without discrimination.

13. This interpretative framework is equally reflected in regional human rights systems, including, article 13 (1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, article 23 of the American Convention on Human Rights, and article 3 of Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention on Human Rights.

A. Right to vote and to be elected (art. 29 (a))

(a) The right to vote and to be elected

14. Article 29 (a) requires States parties to guarantee political rights to persons with disabilities and their enjoyment on an equal basis with others, including the rights to vote and to be elected, affirming the equal political status of persons with disabilities and precluding any direct or indirect exclusion, restriction or limitation grounded in disability. The right to be elected extends beyond formal eligibility to the effective opportunity to stand for election, assume public office and exercise public functions on an equal basis with others, with reasonable accommodation and individualized support, where required. Any legislative, procedural or structural arrangement rendering candidacy or access to public office merely theoretical or illusory for persons with disabilities is incompatible with article 29 (a) and constitutes discrimination on the basis of disability.

15. The Committee observes that persons with disabilities continue to be denied political rights, particularly through restrictions or deprivation of legal capacity, and to face legislative, procedural, attitudinal, informational, communication and physical barriers that may contribute to their persistent underrepresentation in elected bodies, including in relation to voter registration, access to polling stations, secrecy of the ballot, electoral information, candidacy and the holding of public office, as well as those associated with institutionalization.

16. Article 29 recognizes persons with disabilities as holders of political rights on an equal basis with others and contains no limitation clause permitting restrictions on political rights on grounds of disability, including actual or perceived impairment, diagnosis or legal capacity status. Read in conjunction with articles 5 and 12 of the Convention, this precludes any disability-based criterion from determining whether a person holds or may exercise political rights. Any legislative, judicial or administrative measure denying, suspending, restricting or conditioning the rights to vote or to be elected on any such ground, including status-based exclusions, discriminatory eligibility criteria, guardianship or substituted decision-making regimes, or provisions producing such effects in practice, is incompatible with articles 5, 12 and 29 of the Convention. Any individualized assessment of capacity or competence to exercise political rights, whether conducted by a judicial, administrative, medical or electoral authority, also constitutes disability-based discrimination and cannot justify the denial, suspension or restriction of those rights.⁷

17. Compliance with article 29 (a) requires States parties to repeal all such restrictions and ensure that no law, regulation, policy or practice has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the rights to vote and to be elected or of directly or indirectly restricting, suspending or conditioning the exercise of the political rights of persons with disabilities, including through the denial or restriction of legal capacity contrary to article 12 of the Convention. Where disability-based measures have resulted in the denial, suspension or restriction of political rights, those rights must be restored without undue delay and through

⁷ CRPD/C/10/D/4/2011, paras. 9.4–9.6.

procedures consistent with the Convention, without requiring an application, capacity review, reassessment or other individualized procedure.⁸

(b) Accessibility of voting procedures, facilities and materials (art. 29 (a) (i))

18. As clarified in general comment No. 2, article 29 (a) (i) requires States parties to ensure that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, making accessibility a prerequisite for the meaningful exercise of political rights and the free formation and expression of political will. Interpreted in conjunction with articles 9 and 21 of the Convention, this obligation extends beyond the removal of physical barriers and requires the systematic integration of accessibility across the physical, environmental, information, communication and technological dimensions of the electoral process, including polling stations, ballots and voting equipment, voter registration, digital and electronic platforms and technologies, and accessible information and communication systems responsive to diverse sensory, cognitive and communication requirements.

19. All electoral information, including pre-electoral information and guidance, public notices and voter information and education initiatives, must be accessible in practice, enabling persons with disabilities to receive, seek and impart information concerning political participation on an equal basis with others. Efforts should be made to promote the accessibility of campaign materials, political debates and other electoral communications disseminated by political parties and candidates. Accessibility must be embedded from the earliest stages of legislative, policy, planning, and technological processes by consistently applying universal design principles and, where required, accessible technologies, national sign languages, Easy Read, plain language, Braille, large print, captioning, augmentative and alternative communication, and other appropriate supports.

20. The digitalization of electoral systems may deepen exclusion where online voter registration systems, electronic identification mechanisms, electronic voting technologies, automated tools and digital information platforms lack universal design and recognized accessibility standards or interoperability with assistive technologies, creating a persistent gap between guarantees recognized in law and their implementation in practice.

21. Non-compliance with article 29 (a) (i) arises where judicial, administrative or operational frameworks, by design or foreseeable effect, impair or nullify equal voting rights of persons with disabilities, including through the absence of binding accessibility standards; failure to conduct independent assessments sufficiently in advance of elections; inaccessible voter or campaign information and digital platforms; or lack of procedures, equipment or assistive technologies for independent and secret voting. Where accessible ordinary procedures cannot meet an individual voter's requirements, States parties must provide appropriate alternatives, which may include advance voting, accessible postal voting, mobile polling, voting at the voter's residence and, subject to accessibility, security, secrecy and electoral integrity, remote electronic voting. Their use must be freely chosen, preserve autonomy, privacy, confidentiality and ballot non-traceability, prevent coercion, undue influence, surveillance or interference, avoid segregation and restrictions on electoral choice, and must not replace the duty to make ordinary procedures accessible.

22. To give full and practical effect to article 29 (a) (i), States parties must adopt, implement and enforce binding accessibility standards covering all components of elections and public referendums, including physical infrastructure, information and communication channels, digital platforms and campaign-related materials, at every level of government and across all voting modalities. Such standards must be supported by adequate, sustained and predictable financial, technical and administrative resources, effective enforcement procedures and accessible remedies. Accessibility must be integrated into electoral legislation, administration, planning, procurement and oversight rather than addressed through temporary or exceptional measures, without prejudice to reasonable accommodation in individual cases. Independent assessments sufficiently before each electoral process must identify barriers, corrective measures, responsible authorities and clear timeframes and verify

⁸ CRPD/C/10/D/4/2011, para. 10 (a) and (b) (ii); CRPD/C/PER/CO/1, para. 45 (a).

compliance before polling. Electoral management bodies must integrate accessibility from the earliest stages of their planning, design, procurement, testing and technological development; secure independent and secret voting; train electoral officials on accessibility, reasonable accommodation and disability inclusion; and closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities through their representative organizations,). Together with other competent authorities, they must also ensure that residence in institutional, residential or other congregated settings, pending deinstitutionalization, does not itself cause the loss, suspension or transfer of voter registration without the person's free and informed choice.⁹ States parties must also provide reasonable accommodation where required in individual cases, recognizing that its denial constitutes discrimination.

(c) Secrecy of the ballot, protection against intimidation, the right to stand for election, and the effective exercise of public functions, including through the use of assistive and new technologies (art. 29 (a) (ii))

23. Article 29 (a) (ii) requires States parties to guarantee to persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, the right to vote by secret ballot in elections and public referendums without intimidation, to stand for election, to effectively hold office and perform all public functions at all levels of government, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation and by facilitating the use of assistive and other appropriate new technologies. Ballot secrecy constitutes a cornerstone of electoral integrity and an essential safeguard of autonomy, dignity and freedom of political choice and must be secured in law and in practice so that persons with disabilities can form and express their political will independently and confidentially, free from coercion, undue influence, surveillance, manipulation or imposed assistance. No physical, procedural, assisted or electronic voting arrangement may render the vote traceable, verifiable by third parties or subject to post hoc scrutiny. States parties must therefore establish legal, procedural and institutional safeguards against intimidation, harassment, violence, exploitation or retaliation, whether direct or indirect, individual or systemic, particularly in relationships of dependency, in contexts of social marginalization or in institutional or segregated settings, pending their elimination.

24. Read in conjunction with articles 5, 9, 12 and 21 of the Convention, article 29 (a) (ii) further requires that the rights to stand for election and to hold public office be realized in conditions ensuring not only formal eligibility but the full, independent and effective exercise of public authority. In giving effect to article 29 (a), States parties must ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to serve as election officials, polling staff and electoral observers through accessible recruitment, appointment or accreditation procedures, training and working arrangements.¹⁰ Equal participation in these functions requires reasonable accommodation and support where required, the removal of institutional and procedural barriers, and access to assistive and accessible technologies and research support necessary to exercise public functions fully, independently and effectively.

25. Inaccessible voting procedures or equipment, or the lack of access to appropriate assistive technologies, may compel voters with disabilities to rely on third parties, compromising confidentiality and exposing them to risks of pressure or manipulation. Exposure to such pressure or manipulation may be heightened in family, intimate-partner or caregiving relationships, as well as in institutional or segregated settings, pending their elimination. Autonomy is further undermined by legal capacity restrictions, inadequate safeguards against intimidation, harassment or coercion in campaign, public or digital environments, and voting systems that fail to ensure security and non-traceability. The effective holding of public office is similarly impaired when elected officials with disabilities encounter inaccessible parliamentary or governmental premises, procedures, documentation or communication systems; delayed or denied reasonable accommodation, including sign language interpretation; or lack of access to appropriate assistive and secure digital

⁹ CRPD/C/PER/CO/1, para. 45 (a) and (c); see also CRPD/C/GC/6, para. 70 (e).

¹⁰ OSCE/ODIHR, Handbook on Observing and Promoting the Electoral Participation of Persons with Disabilities (Warsaw, 2017), pp. 9 and 42–43; OSCE/ODIHR, Watching Elections and Helping People with Disabilities Take Part in Elections (Warsaw, 2020), p. 27.

technologies needed for meaningful participation in deliberative and decision-making processes.

26. Non-compliance with article 29 (a) (ii) arises from legislative, administrative or operational measures or omissions restricting, suspending or conditioning the right to vote, to stand for election or to hold public office on grounds of disability, including those based on the denial or restriction of legal capacity, guardianship regimes, references to mental incapacity or criteria related to actual or perceived psychosocial disabilities or mental health conditions, whether past or present. Non-compliance is further manifested in voting arrangements requiring or systematically resulting in the presence of third parties during the casting of the ballot without ensuring that assistance is freely chosen, appropriately regulated and compatible with secrecy. Non-compliance also includes the failure to ensure the availability and effective use of accessible ballots, voting equipment and assistive technologies, and inadequate safeguards against coercion, intimidation, harassment or undue influence in public or digital contexts, or in institutional or segregated settings, pending their elimination. It further includes the denial, delay or inadequacy of reasonable accommodation, assistive and accessible technologies and other support needed by candidates and elected officials with disabilities to discharge public functions effectively and with full authority, and failure to prevent, investigate and provide effective remedies for intimidation, harassment or violence, including in digital environments, against candidates or office holders with disabilities.

27. To give full effect to article 29 (a) (ii), States parties must repeal all disability-based restrictions on political rights and establish clear, binding and enforceable safeguards ensuring that assistance is provided exclusively at the voter's request and by a person of their choice, in conditions preserving secrecy and preventing coercion, pressure or undue influence. Accessible and secure voting procedures, equipment and assistive technologies, including systems ensuring confidentiality and non-traceability of the vote, must be provided proactively and systematically, and supported by adequate and sustained resources and effective oversight. States parties must also adopt comprehensive measures to prevent and address intimidation, harassment or violence directed at persons with disabilities in electoral, campaign and digital environments and provide prompt and effective remedies where such violations occur. States parties are required to ensure reasonable accommodation, assistive technologies, accessible parliamentary procedures and documentation, secure digital platforms, communication systems and other technological tools necessary to perform public functions independently and effectively at all levels of government. These obligations are of immediate application.

(d) Free expression of the will of voters with disabilities and the right to assistance in voting (art. 29 (a) (iii))

28. Article 29 (a) (iii) requires States parties to guarantee the free expression of the will of persons with disabilities as electors and, where necessary and at their request, assistance in voting by a person of their choice, recognizing their electoral choices as legally valid and self-determined on an equal basis with others. Read in conjunction with articles 5, 12 and 21, article 29 (a) (iii) requires that the voter's will and preferences constitute the decisive and legally operative expression of political choice, irrespective of disability and without substituted decision-making, external validation or other interference. Assistance in voting does not diminish autonomy but operates as an enabling measure of substantive equality, provided that it remains strictly confined to communicating and implementing the voter's will and preferences, without influencing, interpreting or altering their content, in a manner that preserves the legal integrity, confidentiality and authenticity of the vote.

29. In some jurisdictions, legal authorization of assistance coexists with legislative or administrative arrangements subjecting electoral participation to capacity-based scrutiny, discretionary oversight or informal gatekeeping incompatible with article 12 of the Convention. Where assistance operates as a substitute for systemic accessibility and communication inclusion, rather than as a freely chosen support, persons with disabilities may be compelled to rely on third parties from necessity rather than choice, distorting its equalizing purpose, increasing structural dependency and heightening risks of interference. Formal availability of assistance alone does not secure electoral autonomy, particularly where

social dynamics constrain the independent formation, expression or implementation of political choice. Persons with disabilities who remain in institutional or segregated settings pending their elimination must be able to form and express their political will and exercise their political rights freely and autonomously, without coercion, manipulation or undue influence.

30. Non-compliance with article 29 (a) (iii) arises where laws condition the exercise of voting rights on mental capacity, or authorize guardians or other third parties to determine, restrict or override electoral decisions, in a manner incompatible with the recognition of legal capacity on an equal basis with others pursuant to article 12 of the Convention. Non-compliance also arises where electoral regulations restrict the voter's freedom to choose a trusted assistant or fail to confine assistance to giving effect to the voter's expressed instructions. In institutional or segregated settings, pending their elimination, comparable concerns arise where voting is supervised, collectively organized or externally mediated in ways that enable group voting, de facto assistance by staff or other intermediaries, coercion, manipulation or undue influence within relationships of dependency. The absence of accessible, confidential and effective complaint, oversight and redress mechanisms capable of preventing, identifying and addressing interference with electoral autonomy further undermines the realization of the right guaranteed by article 29 (a) (iii).

31. To give full and practical effect to article 29 (a) (iii), States parties must ensure that electoral legislation and practice recognize the right of persons with disabilities to form and express their electoral will and to cast their vote accordingly, and to receive assistance only at their request and from a person of their choice, in conditions preserving the legal validity and integrity of the vote and excluding substitution or undue influence. Disability-based measures permitting suspension, replacement or override of the voter's decision, including measures incompatible with article 12, must be repealed. Assisted voting must be regulated by clear, binding and enforceable standards and safeguards defining the assistant's role, requiring confidentiality and non-interference, preventing coercion, ensuring accountability and explicitly prohibiting group or staff-controlled voting and assistance influencing, reinterpreting, altering, replacing or overriding the voter's choice, including in institutional or segregated settings pending their elimination. Accessible and comprehensible electoral information, including Easy Read, plain language and other easy-to-understand formats and appropriate communication support, must be provided so that assistance remains a freely chosen support rather than a substitute for inclusion. In implementing these guarantees, electoral authorities must ensure systematic training for relevant officials to prevent paternalistic or substitution-based practices and establish accessible procedures to report, investigate and remedy violations of electoral autonomy.

B. Participation in the conduct of public affairs and associative life

(a) Full and effective participation in the conduct of public affairs (art. 29 (b))

32. Article 29 (b) requires States parties to promote actively an environment in which persons with disabilities can fully and effectively participate in the conduct of public affairs, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others, and to encourage their participation. Beyond electoral rights, this obligation requires positive measures supporting the informed and autonomous participation of persons with disabilities in public affairs, including accessible and non-partisan civic education, and sustained engagement in the processes through which laws, policies, budgets and governance priorities are developed, implemented and assessed. Participation in the conduct of public affairs encompasses engagement in consultative, legislative, administrative and oversight processes, as well as peaceful assemblies, demonstrations, protests, public debate and other forms of civic action, and extends to age-appropriate civic engagement by children and young persons with disabilities through youth councils, children's parliaments, their organizations and other age-appropriate participatory mechanisms, in accordance with article 7 (3) of the Convention. States parties must therefore ensure that laws, public spaces, policing and administrative practices, and information and communication do not exclude persons with disabilities and that accessibility and reasonable accommodation are provided. States parties must establish legal, institutional and societal conditions enabling the timely, informed and effective participation

of persons with disabilities, including through their representative organizations, with meaningful opportunities to influence public policy and institutional practice.

33. Participation continues, in certain contexts, to be episodic, limited to information-sharing or late-stage review, and unable to influence decision-making outcomes, due to inaccessible procedures, information, communication and documentation, inadequate notice, compressed timelines, denial of reasonable accommodation and lack of transparent feedback on how contributions have been assessed and integrated.

34. Non-compliance with article 29 (b) may arise where participatory arrangements lack independence, transparent procedures or authority to influence policy outcomes; operate as parallel or segregated structures; begin only after key decisions have been taken; confine participation to disability-specific matters while excluding broader policy domains; or receive contributions without reasoned responses or transparent information on how input was considered. Non-compliance may also arise where organizations of persons with disabilities are not effectively involved in decision-making processes; participatory structures fail to reach or reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities or marginalize particular groups; consultative processes are inaccessible, allow insufficient time for deliberation, presuppose particular modes of communication or impose administrative, financial or logistical barriers; or monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms are absent and accessible remedies are unavailable or ineffective.

35. To give full effect to article 29 (b), States parties must ensure that persons with disabilities can participate on an equal basis with others throughout the policy cycle, including in agenda-setting, drafting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, supported by adequate resources, accessibility measures and transparent procedural guarantees. Participatory processes must have clear mandates, accessible procedures, reasonable timeframes, accessible information and communication modalities and mechanisms ensuring that contributions are duly considered, including by giving due weight to the views of children and young persons with disabilities in accordance with article 7 (3). Where necessary, States parties must also adopt specific measures, consistent with article 5 (4) of the Convention, to address persistent underrepresentation and structural barriers and to accelerate de facto equality in participation in political and public life.

36. States parties must not treat the appointment of a single person with a disability as sufficient evidence of compliance with article 29 (b) where it results in symbolic representation, isolation or the unreasonable expectation that one individual speak for a diverse constituency. The involvement of family members, supporters, professionals or service providers may complement, but must not replace, the direct participation of persons with disabilities or their representative organizations, which must be led, directed and governed by persons with disabilities. Where participatory arrangements involve selection or appointment, procedures should ensure multiple and diverse representation, transparent selection, continuity and succession, and opportunities to consult constituencies and independent peer networks before and after deliberations. These safeguards must ensure that representation is diverse, accountable and connected to the constituencies concerned.¹¹

37. Participatory processes must combine general and anticipatory accessibility with the prompt provision, without cost to the individual, of reasonable accommodation and support measures responsive to individual requirements.¹² Measures may include advance agendas and accessible materials; flexible scheduling and hybrid participation; real-time captioning and assistive listening systems; a support or peer support person freely chosen by the participant; low-stimulation spaces, breaks or temporary withdrawal without penalty; and opportunities for written contributions before or after meetings. Individualized measures must be identified through confidential dialogue with the participant, in accordance with their will and preferences, and reviewed and adjusted as necessary.

¹¹ CRPD/C/GC/7, paras. 11 (d)–(g), 12 (a), 48 and 50.

¹² CRPD/C/GC/6, paras. 23–26; CRPD/C/GC/7, paras. 45–47.

(b) Participation in political parties, civil society organizations and public life associations (art. 29 (b) (i))

38. Article 29 (b) (i) recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to participate, on an equal basis with others, in non-governmental organizations and associations engaged in political and public life, as well as in the activities and administration of political parties. Participation within the meaning of article 29 (b) (i) therefore encompasses membership and deliberative engagement, involvement in internal elections and candidate nomination processes, and the exercise of leadership, administrative, strategic and decision-making functions. The effective enjoyment of this right presupposes that persons with disabilities are able to influence the governance and direction of political parties and associations on an equal basis with others and are not confined to symbolic, peripheral or consultative roles.

39. Architectural, economic, communication and digital barriers restrict participation in meetings, deliberations and internal decision-making, while the absence of reasonable accommodation and accessible communication modalities further limits sustained participation in organizational governance. Stereotypes concerning political competence, leadership capacity and public representation, as well as stigma, negative attitudes and stigmatizing or derogatory language, particularly towards persons with psychosocial disabilities, further restrict access to executive bodies, policy committees and other strategic decision-making fora, contributing to underrepresentation in leadership and decision-making positions and limiting meaningful influence within these structures.

40. The rights protected under article 29 (b) (i) may be undermined where legislative, regulatory or organizational arrangements do not ensure standards of accessibility and equality; where internal rules, procedures or informal practices directly or indirectly restrict access to leadership positions, candidate selection or administrative responsibilities on the basis of disability; or where reasonable accommodation, accessible communication modalities or assistive technologies are unavailable. Non-compliance may arise where financial contributions, procedural requirements or membership criteria disproportionately disadvantage persons with disabilities; where organizations of persons with disabilities are marginalized within civil society coalitions or political alliances; or where independent oversight, complaint procedures and effective sanctions and remedies are absent.

41. To implement article 29 (b) (i), States parties must establish and maintain a coherent legal and institutional framework ensuring that political parties and civil society organizations operate in accordance with the principles of accessibility, equality and non-discrimination, through the adoption and effective enforcement of adequately resourced measures removing structural barriers and enabling the effective participation of persons with disabilities in internal procedures and decision-making processes, including through reasonable accommodation and assistive technologies. States parties must also address structural underrepresentation by adopting targeted measures to promote de facto equality across all levels of organizational decision-making, including awareness-raising initiatives, capacity-building strategies and leadership development pathways, developed and implemented in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations.

(c) The right to form and join organizations of persons with disabilities (art. 29 (b) (ii))

42. Article 29 (b) (ii) guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to form and join organizations of persons with disabilities to represent them at international, national, regional and local levels, affirming the collective and representative dimension of political participation and recognizing organizations of persons with disabilities as autonomous, self-governed representative bodies through which persons with disabilities represent and promote their interests, engage with public authorities and participate in developing laws, policies and institutional frameworks. Respect for such autonomy requires that organizations of persons with disabilities are able to establish their structures, determine their internal governance, priorities and advocacy strategies independently, and operate without undue interference, substitution or control. As representative actors in political and public life, organizations of persons with disabilities must be closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes.

43. Although freedom of association is recognized in domestic legal systems, structural, regulatory and financial barriers often weaken the autonomy, sustainability and representative capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities and may restrict their ability to establish, lead and participate in their own structures and to operate as independent and effective interlocutors in political and public life.

44. The Committee observes that legislative, administrative and financial barriers, including disproportionate registration, reporting and operational requirements, legislative frameworks relating to legal capacity under article 12 of the Convention, and inequitable and inadequate funding arrangements, may restrict the ability of persons with disabilities to establish, lead or participate in organizations of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others and compromise their autonomy and representative capacity, thereby undermining the rights protected under article 29 (b) (ii). Non-compliance with article 29 (b) (ii) also arises where organizations of persons with disabilities are excluded from institutionalized consultation, monitoring or policy-development processes at local, national, regional or international levels, particularly on matters directly affecting them, or where participation mechanisms are merely formal and their views cannot influence decision-making outcomes. A further manifestation of non-compliance occurs where entities not led, directed or governed by persons with disabilities are accorded representative status in matters affecting them, contrary to the principle that representation must be grounded in self-organization and accountability to persons with disabilities themselves, in accordance with articles 29 (b) (ii) and 4 (3) of the Convention. Restrictions on cooperation, networking and cross-border engagement may further limit the ability of organizations of persons with disabilities to participate in public life on an equal basis with other civil society actors.

45. The effective implementation of article 29 (b) (ii) requires a coherent and enabling legislative and policy framework that recognizes organizations of persons with disabilities as legitimate and independent interlocutors in political and public life, and enables their sustained participation in decision-making processes. Full compliance with article 29 (b) (ii) is achieved where persons with disabilities are able to organize freely and collectively, to represent their constituencies at international, national, regional and local levels and to participate in public affairs through organizations that are self-governed, independent and accountable to persons with disabilities themselves, giving expression to the principle of self-representation.

V. Obligations of States parties

46. In developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing measures to give effect to article 29, States parties must closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities through their representative organizations. Consultation and active involvement must be meaningful, timely and inclusive; enable the views of persons with disabilities to influence the substance, direction and implementation of measures affecting political and public life; be initiated at the earliest stages of policy conception and legislative drafting; and be sustained throughout implementation, monitoring and review, with clear information on how contributions have been assessed and reflected in subsequent stages of the decision-making process.

47. States parties must ensure that accessibility is embedded in consultation and decision-making processes as an inherent requirement of equality, rather than provided through discretionary or ad hoc adjustments. Physical and digital environments, procedural frameworks, deliberative formats and participatory channels must, therefore, be fully accessible to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others and in conformity with recognized accessibility standards, including sensory and cognitive accessibility requirements. Interpreted in conjunction with articles 9 and 21 of the Convention, this obligation encompasses the systematic removal of architectural, sensory and procedural barriers, the provision of appropriate communication modalities, including easy-to-understand formats, and reasonable accommodation where required for effective and dignified participation. States parties must also ensure that consultation and decision-making processes fully respect the legal capacity, will and preferences of persons with disabilities, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention.

48. Accessibility obligations extend in equal measure to information and communication infrastructure, digital platforms and emerging technologies used in public affairs, which must be accessible by design, interoperable with assistive technologies and developed, procured and maintained in conformity with recognized accessibility standards. Interpreted in conjunction with articles 9, 21 and 22 of the Convention, this obligation requires that such systems are accessible in practice, enable persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to seek, receive and impart information in accessible formats and communication modalities of their choice and safeguard privacy. Where digital technologies, including automated decision-making systems and systems incorporating artificial intelligence, are integrated into processes relating to civic and political participation, States parties must ensure that their design, development, deployment and oversight do not generate new forms of exclusion, discrimination, algorithmic bias or lack of transparency, or limit or interfere with the exercise of legal capacity. Accessible alternatives, human supervision, and effective avenues for review and redress must also be guaranteed. Where biometric registration or authentication is used, States parties must ensure that an accessible non-biometric alternative is available when persons with disabilities cannot be enrolled or reliably authenticated, so that their participation and inclusion on the electoral register are not adversely affected.¹³ Error and rejection rates must be independently monitored and published in disaggregated form, subject to privacy and personal data safeguards.

49. To give full effect to article 29, States parties must respect, protect and fulfill participation rights as distinct but interrelated obligations, by refraining from disability-based restrictions, including the denial or restriction of legal capacity, consistent with the requirements of article 12 of the Convention, protecting against interference or coercion by public or private actors and adopting positive measures to dismantle structural barriers that impede participation throughout the political cycle. These obligations apply both where political rights are denied to persons with disabilities and where such rights cannot be exercised effectively and must be implemented consistently with the principles of equality and non-discrimination under article 5 of the Convention.

50. States parties must enable organizations of persons with disabilities to operate independently and sustainably as representative interlocutors at international, national, regional and local levels, including by securing equitable and transparent access to resources and capacity-enhancing measures, institutionalizing mechanisms for consultation and participation, and guaranteeing, in accordance with article 33 (3), their full involvement in monitoring frameworks established under article 33 (2). Any public or private support must preserve their autonomy and representative character and must neither interfere with their self-organization or accountability to persons with disabilities, nor be used to exercise control or undue influence over their governance, priorities or advocacy positions. States parties must therefore maintain an open, safe and enabling civic space; prevent and remedy discriminatory or disproportionate restrictions on freedom of association, access to funding or cross-border cooperation; protect persons engaged, individually or collectively, in advocacy, consultation or monitoring from stigmatization, surveillance, intimidation and reprisals; and recognize their role as human rights defenders, including when they express dissenting views.

51. Since participation rights lack practical effect without accountability for exclusionary conduct or procedurally deficient consultation, States parties must establish monitoring, evaluation and enforcement mechanisms to assess both the formal existence and the substantive quality and impact of participatory arrangements. Independent monitoring mechanisms established pursuant to article 33 (2) of the Convention should contribute to this process, with the full involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in accordance with article 33 (3). Such mechanisms must provide accessible complaint procedures, guarantee access to justice and timely and effective remedies, and include safeguards against intimidation, retaliation or undue interference directed at persons with disabilities, their supporters or their representative organizations.

52. Without modifying or diminishing the obligations arising under the Convention, States parties should ensure coherence between the Convention and relevant international

¹³ CRPD/C/GC/8, paras. 5 and 82 (f); A/HRC/48/31, paras. 25–31, 39, 45 and 49–50; A/HRC/RES/46/16.

and regional commitments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through measurable objectives, systematic collection and use of disaggregated data and participatory monitoring arrangements involving persons with disabilities through their representative organizations consistent with article 33 (3) of the Convention.

VI. Relationship with other provisions of the Convention

53. The Committee emphasizes that article 29 must be interpreted in light of article 4 of the Convention, particularly article 4 (3). Consultation and participatory processes must ensure substantive influence in decision-making and avoid merely symbolic forms of participation. States parties must therefore establish inclusive, continuous and adequately supported mechanisms capable of shaping legislative, administrative and policy outcomes.

54. Article 29 must also be read in conjunction with article 5 of the Convention and general comment No. 6 on equality and non-discrimination. Inclusive equality in political and public life must be understood through its fair redistributive, recognition, participative and accommodating dimensions, requiring States parties to identify and eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, denial of reasonable accommodation, harassment and multiple, intersectional, structural and systemic forms of discrimination. States parties must also repeal disability-based disqualifications and apparently neutral requirements with disproportionate exclusionary effects. Reasonable accommodation must be provided promptly and without cost to the individual in the exercise of political rights, including in elections, candidacy for and the holding of public office, participation in political parties and associations, and public decision-making processes. Accessible complaint mechanisms, effective remedies and appropriate sanctions must also be ensured. Where required, specific measures under article 5 (4) must remedy historic and continuing underrepresentation and secure substantive equality in representation, leadership and influence, including for persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, persons continuing to live in institutions pending their elimination, Indigenous persons with disabilities and other groups exposed to intersectional discrimination. Such measures may include time-bound targets, quotas or reserved seats, inclusive candidate-list requirements, targeted recruitment and leadership programs, support to address disability-related costs associated with candidacy and participation, and accessibility or representation conditions attached to the public funding of political parties, and must be proportionate to the disadvantage addressed, monitored and reviewed, and maintained for as long as necessary to accelerate or achieve de facto equality. Their design, implementation and review must not perpetuate segregation, stereotyping or unequal standards of political competence.

55. Consistent with the Committee's general comment No. 3 on women and girls with disabilities, article 29 must also be interpreted in light of article 6 and its protection against multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. In political and public life, such discrimination may take the form of structural and systemic underrepresentation, gender-based violence, exclusion from party structures and decision-making fora, digital harassment and socio-economic marginalization, restricting access to candidacy, leadership and civic engagement. Compliance with article 29 therefore requires the adoption of targeted and sustained measures addressing gender-specific and intersectional barriers, including the collection of disaggregated data, the prevention of gender-based violence in political contexts and the establishment of safe and accessible participation environments enabling women with disabilities to participate fully and effectively in political and public life.

56. Article 8 is also fundamental to the effective realization of article 29 because ableist stereotypes, stigma and assumptions that persons with disabilities lack political competence, independence or leadership capacity sustain exclusion in law and in practice even where political rights are formally recognized. States parties must therefore adopt immediate, effective, appropriate, sustained and adequately resourced awareness-raising measures, designed and implemented to promote respect for their rights, dignity, capabilities and contributions and to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices, including gendered and intersectional stereotypes. Such measures should address electoral authorities, public officials, political parties, candidates, the judiciary, law enforcement bodies, the media, digital platforms, civil society and the general public, include rights-based training and

accessible public information, and increase the visibility of persons with disabilities as voters, candidates, elected representatives, public officials, advocates and leaders. Awareness-raising measures must complement, and never replace, legal reforms, accessibility requirements, reasonable accommodation, support, safeguards and remedies, and must be monitored to assess their impact. In giving effect to these obligations, States parties must also ensure that public and media communications do not reproduce paternalistic, charitable or medical-model portrayals of disability.¹⁴

57. Article 29 must also be read in conjunction with article 9 of the Convention, as elaborated in general comment No. 2, which establishes accessibility as an *ex ante*, unconditional and systemic obligation not dependent on individual requests. States parties must therefore ensure the accessibility of the built environment, transportation, information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public. Accessibility must extend throughout the political cycle, including voter registration, polling stations and voting methods, electoral information and campaigns, candidacy and nomination, political party and civil society activities, public consultations, legislative and administrative proceedings, the exercise of public functions, and digital and artificial intelligence-enabled systems. Binding accessibility standards based on universal design must apply to public and private actors, be incorporated into procurement and licensing frameworks and be supported by specific time frames, adequate resources, independent monitoring, enforceable sanctions, accessible complaints and effective remedies. Implementing accessibility measures does not eliminate the obligation to provide reasonable accommodation through necessary and appropriate modifications or adjustments where required to enable participation on an equal basis with others.

58. Article 29 must also be implemented in conjunction with article 11, which requires States parties to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflict, foreign occupation, protracted conflict and post-conflict militarization, humanitarian emergencies and disasters. In such contexts, States parties must preserve the participation of persons with disabilities in decisions directly affecting their rights and survival throughout emergency responses, contingency electoral arrangements when possible, crisis governance, and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction, by ensuring accessibility, reasonable accommodation and inclusive consultation, while preventing emergency measures from suspending, restricting or *de facto* nullifying participation rights on grounds related to disability.

59. The effective implementation of article 29 is intrinsically dependent upon the full recognition of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, as guaranteed under article 12 of the Convention. Any denial or restriction of legal capacity that, whether through legal disqualification, substituted decision-making, external validation or capacity-based scrutiny, deprives persons with disabilities of political rights or renders their will and preferences legally ineffective constitutes a direct violation of article 29. States parties must therefore ensure that all processes of political and public participation fully respect the legal capacity, will and preferences of persons with disabilities and provide support in the exercise of legal capacity where required, without recourse to disability-based assessments of political competence or other forms of substituted decision-making.

60. Since political participation may expose persons with disabilities, particularly women and persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, to heightened risks of intimidation, coercion, harassment and targeted violence, including in digital environments, States parties must ensure, in accordance with article 16 and, as relevant, the Committee's general comment No. 3, that protective frameworks addressing exploitation, violence and abuse extend to political and public life and include safeguards against coercion in voting, retaliation for civic engagement, harassment targeting candidates, elected representatives or activists with disabilities, and other forms of intimidation or violence motivated by stigma or prejudice related to actual or perceived mental health conditions or psychosocial disabilities. The presence of intimidation or violence deterring or suppressing participation constitutes a direct impediment to the equal enjoyment of rights under article 29 and requires the adoption of

¹⁴ CRPD/C/5.

preventive, protective, reporting, investigative and remedial measures accessible and responsive to gender, age and disability.

61. Consistent with the Committee's general comment No. 5 and its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, article 29 must be read in conjunction with article 19 of the Convention, which guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to live independently and to be included in the community, including through access to the support and living arrangements necessary for its effective realization. In the sphere of political and public participation, institutional, congregated and segregated living arrangements, the denial of community inclusion and the absence of adequate support may significantly restrict participation in electoral and civic processes, including through barriers concerning residence, mobility and access to information, representative organizations, public debate and collective advocacy, and exposure to control or undue influence, undermining the formation, expression and collective articulation of political will and reinforcing relationships of dependency incompatible with articles 19 and 29 of the Convention. States parties must therefore end institutionalization, prevent new institutional placements and ensure access to individualized support and community-based services to enable persons with disabilities to exercise their rights under article 29 on an equal basis with others, including in emergencies.

62. Article 21, read in conjunction with article 29, requires States parties to adopt comprehensive and coordinated measures ensuring that information relevant to political and public life is accessible in practice and supports effective and independent participation. Accessible formats and communication modalities responsive to diverse sensory, cognitive and communication requirements must be available at the same time and through the same channels as the corresponding information provided to the general public. The scope of this obligation is not confined to material produced or disseminated by public authorities but extends to the broader information environment. In accordance with article 21 (c) and (d), States parties must therefore urge private entities providing services to the general public, including through the Internet, to ensure the accessibility of election-related content and services and encourage mass media to make their coverage of political and public affairs accessible to persons with disabilities.

63. Insufficient protection of personal data and confidentiality may expose individuals to undue interference, unauthorized disclosure or external influence in the exercise of their political rights, including within electoral processes and civic activities. Participation must therefore not be conditioned on the public disclosure of a diagnosis, treatment history or disability status, and data collected to arrange accessibility, reasonable accommodation or support must be processed on the basis of free and informed consent, kept confidential and separate from voter-registration and eligibility records, and retained no longer than necessary. The collection, disaggregation and use of data for electoral administration, participation monitoring or statistical purposes must likewise comply with article 22 and be subject to strict safeguards concerning necessity, purpose limitation, confidentiality, security, data separation and limited retention. Such data must not be linked to or used in determinations of electoral eligibility, must not be processed in a manner permitting the identification or inference of individual political choices, the profiling of political activity or surveillance¹⁵ and must be subject to safeguards ensuring the confidentiality of personal information, protecting the secrecy of the vote and preserving individual autonomy throughout all forms of political and public participation.

64. Article 29, read in conjunction with article 32, requires States parties to ensure that international cooperation initiatives concerning governance reform, public institutions, digital public infrastructure and civic participation integrate accessibility standards, are inclusive of persons with disabilities, and are supported by adequate and sustained resources for inclusive participation at local, national, regional and international levels.

65. Article 29 must also be read in conjunction with article 33, particularly article 33 (3). States parties must therefore establish inclusive, accessible and participatory monitoring mechanisms that ensure the full involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

¹⁵ See CRPD/C/GC/8, para. 75; A/HRC/48/31, paras. 30–35 and 41–43; and A/HRC/RES/46/16.

VII. Implementation at the national level

(a) Legislative and policy alignment: Comprehensive review and harmonization of domestic legal frameworks

66. States parties must undertake a comprehensive, methodical and ongoing review of their constitutional, legislative and regulatory frameworks to secure full conformity with the Convention and to repeal laws and regulations directly or indirectly impairing the equal participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life. This review must cover electoral legislation, civil and administrative law, statutes governing political parties and associations, public service regulations and provisions concerning legal capacity, de facto equality, accessibility and participation.

67. States parties must also integrate participation in political and public life as a cross-cutting principle into national disability strategies, governance reforms and public administration policies and implement it at every level of government, including in federal and decentralized systems irrespective of the internal distribution of competences, in accordance with article 4 (5) of the Convention. National and subnational action plans, electoral reforms and equality frameworks must therefore ensure the consistent involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations. Effective implementation requires appropriate institutional conditions, including designated public authorities, clear institutional responsibilities and budgetary commitments, effective coordination and monitoring arrangements, implementation timelines, accessible reporting, measurable objectives and adequate, sustained resources to remove legislative, institutional and practical barriers and enable sustained and autonomous engagement.

(b) Embedding permanent participatory mechanisms across all branches of government

68. To promote an environment conducive to full and effective participation, States parties must ensure regular, predictable and effective opportunities for participation at every level of government. Measures should include permanent and transparent participatory mechanisms governed by clear procedures across the executive and legislative branches of government and within independent public institutions. To guarantee their inclusiveness and effectiveness, such mechanisms must incorporate accessible outreach measures capable of reaching all persons with disabilities, including those not affiliated with organizations of persons with disabilities, and sustain participation throughout agenda-setting, drafting, adoption, implementation and evaluation. At each stage, participation must be accompanied by procedural guarantees, including adequate notice, accessible documentation, appropriate communication support and written, reasoned explanations, published in accessible formats and within a specified and reasonable time, showing how contributions were considered and influenced outcomes. States parties must further ensure that participatory arrangements taking the form of advisory bodies or consultative fora operate continuously, with clear mandates, defined competencies, sufficient authority and effective channels to influence decisions, thereby preventing formal exclusion and ineffective participation.

69. States parties must also ensure adequate and sustainable access to resources for organizations of persons with disabilities. Funding mechanisms must, therefore, be accessible, transparent, equitable and proportionate and must not disadvantage smaller, grass-roots organizations, self-advocacy or peer-led groups, or organizations representing otherwise underrepresented constituencies on the basis of their size or administrative capacity.

(c) Structural accessibility and systemic safeguards

70. The implementation of article 29 at the national level requires coordinated integration of accessibility, reasonable accommodation and necessary support throughout the political cycle, including voter registration, electoral administration, public consultations, candidacy procedures and the exercise of public functions. Accessibility must therefore be embedded in procurement, public infrastructure standards, digital governance systems and civil service regulations, supported by adequate financial, technical and administrative resources and subject to effective monitoring and enforcement. States parties must treat accessibility as an

anticipatory obligation applying to systems and processes as a whole. Support for political participation must also be provided without creating indirect financial barriers, including through coverage of costs associated with personal assistance, support persons, accessible transport, communication support and assistive technologies where necessary to enable participation on an equal basis with others.

71. In implementing article 29, read in conjunction with articles 5 and 28, States parties must ensure that financial arrangements do not discriminate against persons with disabilities in their participation in political and public life. Necessary expenses incurred in consultations, advisory bodies and other public decision-making processes, including travel, subsistence and connectivity costs, should be covered or promptly reimbursed. Additional accessibility- and disability-related campaign costs should be publicly funded or excluded from ordinary campaign spending limits to avoid disadvantaging candidates with disabilities.¹⁶ Disability-related benefits, personal assistance, health coverage or other support required because of disability should not be reduced or withdrawn solely because a person receives income from holding public office.¹⁷

72. States parties must ensure that legislative, administrative or policy reforms do not introduce retrogressive measures diminishing existing levels of accessibility, representation or participation, and must establish effective safeguards capable of preventing the reintroduction of disability-based restrictions or indirect forms of exclusion, including those arising from the denial or restriction of legal capacity.¹⁸ Judicial review mechanisms, equality bodies and independent monitoring institutions must be empowered to scrutinize laws, policies and practices affecting political participation, while effective remedies must be available where violations occur.

(d) Monitoring, data and accountability

73. In accordance with article 31 of the Convention, States parties must systematically collect, analyze and disseminate disaggregated data on the participation in political and public life of persons with disabilities, including voter registration, turnout, candidacy, election to public office, representation in elected and appointed bodies at all levels of government and engagement in consultative mechanisms. Disaggregation processes must encompass disability, sex, age, ethnicity, Indigenous status, migration status, socio-economic status, rurality, place of residence, type of impairment and barriers causing the deprivation of political rights, including those linked to limitations of legal capacity. Pending the end of institutionalization and segregated living arrangements, data collection processes must also ensure disaggregation by residence in institutional, congregated or segregated settings. The collection, disaggregation, dissemination and use of such data must comply with article 22 and be subject to strict safeguards concerning necessity, purpose limitation, confidentiality, security, data separation and limited retention. States parties must therefore develop measurable and time-bound qualitative and quantitative indicators, including structural, process and outcome indicators assessing progress in reducing disparities in political participation, strengthening inclusive governance and evaluating the effectiveness of participatory processes.

74. States parties must provide accessible, independent and effective accountability mechanisms capable of promptly addressing violations of the right to participate in political and public life, including oversight bodies, complaint procedures and judicial or administrative remedies, and empowered to examine exclusionary consultation practices, discriminatory electoral arrangements, instances of intimidation or interference and any deprivation of political rights arising from the denial or restriction of legal capacity. Accountability processes must operate in an accessible, transparent and responsive manner, with procedural accommodation available throughout electoral dispute-resolution processes,

¹⁶ A/HRC/61/46; OSCE/ODIHR, *Handbook on Observing and Promoting the Electoral Participation of Persons with Disabilities* (Warsaw, 2017), pp. 42–43; OSCE/ODIHR, *Disability Quotas for Parliamentary Elections* (Warsaw, 2025), recommendation 6; see also CRPD/C/GBR/Q/1/Add.1, para. 17.

¹⁷ CRPD/C/GC/6, para. 67 (c); CRPD/C/GC/7, para. 87; CRPD/C/GC/8, paras. 64 (c) and 78.

¹⁸ CRPD/C/GC/8, para. 56.

including within the short time limits applicable to complaints and appeals. States parties must also ensure access to judicial review and effective remedies where discriminatory rules or practices within political parties or associations impair the participation of persons with disabilities on an equal basis.

(e) Multilevel and crisis-responsive implementation

75. States parties must also ensure that emergency preparedness, response and recovery frameworks preserve and appropriately adapt the right to participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others in situations of risk, including armed conflict, foreign occupation, protracted conflict, post-conflict contexts, humanitarian emergencies, disasters and public health crises. Emergency legislation and contingency arrangements concerning political and public participation must incorporate accessibility requirements, inclusive information and communication measures, including in national sign languages, and must ensure that the exercise of political rights by persons with disabilities is not denied or restricted on the basis of disability, including through measures affecting the recognition of legal capacity.

76. In accordance with article 32, States parties must ensure that, to the extent that international cooperation and public governance programming concern electoral reform, public administration, civic engagement or other aspects of political and public participation, including in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, they are inclusive of persons with disabilities and promote their participation on an equal basis with others. International partnerships, technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives in these areas must promote the exchange of practices aligned with the Convention, strengthen representative organizations and support the development of inclusive institutional models, while ensuring that cooperation frameworks reinforce, rather than dilute or defer, the binding obligations established under the Convention.
