

3 December 2018

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the Women's Refugee Commission, we welcome the timely focus of this Arria meeting on persons with disabilities and thank the organizers for convening the event.

As we have heard today, persons with disabilities—especially women and girls—face specific challenges in conflict settings but largely remain excluded from the decision-making processes concerning their lives.

During conflicts, women with disabilities face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination related to their gender, age, disability, or refugee status, which significantly increase their risk of gender-based violence.

The loss of community support and protection mechanisms exacerbates the risk of violence against women and girls with disabilities and hinders their access to critical protections and services, including sexual and reproductive health care.

Madam Chair, at the Women's Refugee Commission we know first-hand the skills, capacities, and potential that women and girls with disabilities bring to the table. The Council should stop looking at women with disabilities solely through a protection lens and ensure their meaningful participation in humanitarian response and decision-making.

As we have learned from the women, peace, and security agenda, there is no protection without participation. In this context, we were pleased to see this year's Secretary-General's Report on Women, Peace and Security recommends scaling up support for women-led disability organizations.

Further, we are proud to be supporting the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to develop global Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. As a task team member, the Women's Refugee Commission's contribution has focused on addressing gender-based violence in the guidelines and ensuring that women's protection and empowerment are mainstreamed throughout.

Moving forward we ask:

- That the Council regularly consult with persons with disabilities, especially women, and meet with local women-led disability organizations when going on country missions.
- That humanitarian actors seek technical advice and support from women-led DPOs and hire more staff with disabilities.
- And that the United Nations agencies and the Secretary-General recruit women with disabilities and consult them as standard practice when preparing their reports submitted to the Council, for example, on conflict-related sexual violence.

Thank you.