

DISABILITY SPECIAL SESSION

KEYNOTE SPEECH

BY MR. BAN KI MOON,

SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS:

(AS DELIVERED)

Thank you Katalina. Special Rapporteur, ministers, Excellencies and friends.

Thank you for your commitment to ensure that people with disability can access humanitarian aid and participate in humanitarian actions. The charter is a breakthrough in recognizing the special needs of people with disability during emergencies. I commend the 70 entities and organizations that gave their time and resources to develop it through a transparent, inclusive and multi stakeholder process, and that reflects the truly spirit of WHS.

People with disabilities often suffer disproportionately in crises. They can be among the most vulnerable and are often omitted from risk assessments and policy formulations. This charter aims to change this situation by strengthening protection and safety of people with disability in emergencies, and helping them to participate in preparedness and response programs. But the charter is not an end in itself. Now we must work together to develop global standards and guidelines and move on to implementation.

I met some of you, even though I have not been able to meet with all the persons with disabilities. I am very much humbled and touched by your strong courage. It is important to have a strong courage and perseverance. Your personal activities may be inconvenient, you may not be able to move freely around like other people, you may not be able to see, hear, or act as freely as your friends. But that does not mean that there should be any discrimination or any different treatment. [...] All human rights and human dignity should be protected. That's why the UN has adopted the convention of the rights of people with disabilities. This is very important [applause]

And I would like to thank everyone involved who are helping/promoting the dignity of the people with disabilities. Without your promotion and sacrifice, life will be much more difficult, and their social economic status and participation will have been much more reduced. I am immensely grateful to all of the organizations who are represented here today. While we uphold the spirit now generated and expressed in the World Humanitarian Summit, let us work together to make this world better for all so they can all also fully enjoy their life.

Thank you very much for your commitment.

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