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Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

Subregional Meeting on the Implementation of the Convention
on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
9-10 November 2010
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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**REPORT OF THE SUBREGIONAL MEETING ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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A. DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Countries recognized the value of collecting data on persons with disabilities for the purpose of policy formulation and noted that more efforts and resources must be devoted to this process through the use of instruments such as national censuses, household surveys, administrative records and qualitative data.
2. Noting the importance of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, the meeting agreed that countries should move forward with signing and ratifying the CRPD.
3. Disaster preparedness for people with disabilities was critical in minimizing the impact of disasters. As such, given that persons with disabilities were most vulnerable in disasters, there was a consensus that countries should focus on broadening national disaster preparedness and management plans to take into account persons with disabilities. Additionally, countries recognized the value added by involving persons with disabilities at all stages of the planning process as a means of ensuring that their needs were adequately addressed.
4. Increasing public awareness and sensitization of government officials on issues related to disability and the barriers (physical, attitudinal, legislative) confronted by persons with disabilities in society was a significant precondition for ensuring their full participation and integration into society. Countries recognized that more effort needed to be devoted to promoting awareness of disability in the subregion.
5. Countries noted the urgent need to address the lack of coordination among various stakeholders on disability which included governments, non-governmental organizations, disabled persons' organizations, civil society and service providers and agreed to strengthen mechanisms.
6. Persons with disabilities should be included in national development plans, as donors tended to fund activities that were stated in national development plans and priorities.
7. Countries needed to implement legislation to protect the legal, social, political and economic rights of children with disabilities.

B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date of the session

8. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) convened the meeting in Port of Spain, on 9 to 10 November 2010. Other sponsors of the meeting were the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

2. Attendance

9. Representatives of the following member States attended the meeting: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.
10. Five associate members were represented: Anguilla, Aruba, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Montserrat.
11. The United Nations Secretariat was represented by DESA, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and OHCHR.
12. The following United Nations bodies were represented: UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and UNFPA.
13. The specialized agency of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization (ILO), attended the meeting.
14. Representatives of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the University of the West Indies (UWI) and Disabled Peoples' International (Trinidad and Tobago Chapter) attended the meeting.

3. Organization of work

15. The meeting adopted the Draft Programme, which set out the organization of work.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of the meeting

16. At the opening session of the Subregional Meeting on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, remarks were made by the following speakers: Ms. Safak Pavey, Secretary to the Committee, Rights of Persons with Disabilities, OHCHR, Mr. Derven Patrick, Technical Specialist, UNFPA, Mr. Hirohito Toda, Deputy Director, Officer-In-Charge, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Mr. Bob Huber, Chief, Technical Cooperation Unit, DSPD/DESA, and Senator Kerry-Ann Ifill, Government of Barbados

17. The representative of OHCHR noted that, to date, 95 countries had ratified the CRPD. She remarked on the work of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as the host of the monitoring mechanism of the CRPD and expressed her optimism about working with some of the countries in the subregion as they advanced towards reporting and ratification of the Convention. She outlined the objectives and expected outcomes of the monitoring sessions that would be held in Geneva in April, 2011. She concluded by expressing her expectations of the meeting in heightening the awareness of participants of the fundamental human rights principles which were at the core of the CRPD.

18. The representative of UNFPA reflected on how the perception of the inclusion of issues of sexual reproduction and human rights evolved over the years. He highlighted the achievements and initiatives that preceded the approval of the CRPD to illustrate the strides made in advancing the need of sexual and reproductive rights of all persons. He reiterated the importance of implementing the articles and processes of the CRPD and restated that the onus was on governments to ensure the implementation of those articles. He noted the disproportionately large percentages of persons with

disabilities who lived in poverty. He concluded by expressing his expectation of the achievement of Millennium Development Goal #5 which targeted sexual and reproductive health and rights for all by 2015.

19. The representative of DESA underscored that the Convention encompassed a combination of human rights and development. He stated the organization's objective in advancing and promoting discussion on the implementation of the Convention at the regional level. He reflected on the genesis of the Convention and noted that it was driven by the work of persons in the disabled community. Indeed, the concept of a "society for all" originated there. He noted that social policy should emphasize flexibility and tolerance, rather than prescribe a framework to which different social groups had to adapt.

20. In his presentation, the Officer-in-Charge of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean reflected on the prevalence of disabilities in the Latin America and Caribbean region and noted that approximately 1 in 10 persons were reported to have some disability. He highlighted the discrimination and barriers faced by persons with disabilities in employment, education and accessing basic needs. He observed the need to ensure that the principles of the CRPD were honoured by persons with disabilities.

21. In her address, Senator Kerry-Ann Ifill underscored the timeliness of the meeting in addressing key concerns of persons with disabilities. Being a person with a disability, she echoed the value of the CRPD and noted the strides that had been made since the signing of the Convention. She, however, lamented the lack of anti-discrimination legislation. She drew attention to the impact of factors such as an ageing population, the rise in violent crimes and traffic accidents on increasing the number of persons with disabilities. She outlined the barriers to full integration including access to health care, education, and employment and emphasized the value of the CRPD in assuring rights to full participation and inclusion. In proposing a way forward for the subregion, she advanced the need for a re-envisioning and rethinking of the services provided by tourism-based economies. She proposed an improvement in the services to persons with disabilities and making tourism barrier-free for that growing group of persons. Finally, she noted the successes that had been recorded in more developed countries which had adapted their tourism product to the new market conditions.

2. Adoption of the agenda

22. The provisional agenda was adopted without any amendments, as follows:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
4. Background Studies
5. Panel I – Life Cycle Issues
6. Panel II – Risk, Rights and Vulnerable Groups
7. Panel III – Planning Frameworks
8. Panel IV – Empowerment and Disability
9. Summary and closing

3. The Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities

23. The representative of DESA outlined the background to the CRPD, commencing with the establishment by the General Assembly in 2001 of an ad hoc committee to "consider proposals for a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities". She noted that the Convention was a human rights instrument with a social development dimension, which reaffirmed that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. A summary was given to participants of how the United

Nations had promoted the implementation of the CRPD and support for national data collection. She stated that DESA was hoping to explore new ways and options to promote the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities in development in partnerships with civil society, governments and other stakeholders.

24. The representative of OHCHR outlined the rationale and justification for a Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, stating that the invisibility of persons with disabilities veiled a situation of marginalization and human rights abuses. Additionally, prior instruments and standards were not specific enough to provide comprehensive protection. The structure and the content of the CRPD, as well as its principles were explained. Emphasis was placed on the respect for dignity and individual autonomy, independent living and full participation in all aspects of life. She further highlighted some of the specific measures outlined in the CRPD including awareness raising, access to justice, habilitation and rehabilitation, accessibility, personal mobility, data collection and international cooperation.

25. Participants gave an account of the process of implementation of the CRPD in their respective countries. Although several countries stated that they had signed on to the CRPD, Jamaica was the only one to have ratified. The ECLAC questionnaire was a useful tool for many of the meeting participants as countries were able to assess their needs with regards to implementation. Those countries that did not sign the CRPD stressed that there was need for technical assistance in terms of capacity development and financial resources for its implementation. A number of the countries also noted the need for awareness raising and sensitization on the daily issues confronted by persons with disabilities in order to maintain pressure on governments to implement the CRPD.

26. The representative of OHCHR recommended a tool entitled “The Handbook for Parliamentarians” as a good resource for governments and policy makers for the implementation of the CRPD. There was also the new guidance publication on monitoring the CRPD and reporting guidelines available to support States Parties.

27. The representative of DESA stated that countries could be guided by the Convention as it could provide a framework for addressing priorities, even though they had not signed. He also explained the notion of ‘progressive realization’ whereby a country did not have to meet all provisions of the Convention on the day of ratification but to make progress with implementation according to the resources available.

4. Background studies

(a) Situational analysis of the implementation of the CRPD in the Caribbean subregion

28. A representative of ECLAC presented a background paper on the situational analysis of the implementation of the CRPD in the Caribbean subregion. That study resulted from previous work done by ECLAC whereby a strong recommendation was made to conduct a follow-up study to “collect information on the availability of statistical information on persons with disabilities and on the implementation of legislation and policies in order to measure the commitment of governments in the Caribbean region towards the CRPD.” As such, ECLAC conducted a baseline study which comprised three questionnaires for national statistical offices, government ministries and non-governmental organizations in the Dutch- and English-speaking Caribbean in an attempt to get feedback on the situation of persons with disabilities. The presentation gave a brief overview of the findings of the study which showed that in the Caribbean some improvements had been made in relation to the situation of persons with disabilities in the areas of legislation, education and employment. However, more work was needed in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, accessibility and personal mobility as well as access to information and communication.

29. The representative of UNFPA recommended that the study look at the question of health care accessibility (financial and physical access) as those factors impacted on the ability of persons with disability to use such services.

30. The representative of Aruba noted that non-governmental organizations might not have received the ECLAC questionnaire and suggested that they be given an opportunity to respond in order to provide a wider point of view.

31. A representative from ECLAC noted that the questionnaire provided a good baseline for future research.

32. The representative of UNDP suggested that the study should contribute to a 'bench marking' process for gauging the progress that countries made on the implementation of the CRPD and provision of services for persons with disabilities. The survey questionnaires could also be used for comparability in the next 10 to 15 years. He also noted in the study that only a few countries addressed the topic on physical adaptation for employment and suggested that there should be a clear definition of what "reasonable adaptation" encompassed.

(b) Availability, collection and use of data on disability in the Caribbean

33. A representative of ECLAC presented the outcomes of a survey to assess the availability of data on persons with disabilities in the Caribbean subregion. The survey revealed that most countries collected data on persons with disabilities through the decennial censuses. Data from the subregion indicated that while some countries had incorporated the collection and compilation of disability data as part of their statistical activities, the statistics generated were not comparable and presented a challenge for generating a reliable prevalence rate for the Caribbean subregion. The issues of non-comparability stemmed from differences in the concepts and methods used to identify persons with disabilities. Those issues reinforced the need for countries to revise their data collection practices and adopt the international recommendations and frameworks for collecting and disseminating data on disability. The presentation reinforced the significance of collecting data on persons with disabilities contained in article 31 of the CRPD.

34. Participants noted the value of the survey in identifying areas of weakness in data collection practices. They observed the low response rate for the survey that made the results unrepresentative and hampered the conclusiveness of the findings. In light of that, a strong appeal was made for countries to assist with the completion of the survey.

36. The representative of the Trinidad and Tobago Disabled Peoples' International underscored the value of having a national registry on persons with disability. He observed that that information, along with other data such as censuses and surveys, were critical for supporting evidence-based policy formulation and outlined his plans for the establishment of such a registry locally.

37. The representative of Aruba posed a question on the collection of data on autism which was not included in the recommended list of short questions. In response, the ECLAC representative stated that while countries should be guided by the international recommendations and standards for collection of data on persons with disabilities, national data collection should, first and foremost address specific national needs. As such national, statistical offices and data collecting agencies had the flexibility of including any additional data or variables that were deemed necessary or which are critical for national purposes.

5. Panel I – Life cycle issues

38. In her presentation, the panellist UWI noted that a significant percentage of the population in the Caribbean was living with disabilities. Only 5% of disabled children in developing countries had

access to support or services of any kind and less than 2% attended school. That was mainly due to physical and attitudinal barriers that prevented families and communities from providing those students with the same opportunities that their non disabled counterparts had. Some initiatives to promote access to education for children with disabilities in countries such as Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were physically upgrading schools to improve accessibility for students with disabilities, teacher training and training of other personnel and support for early diagnosis of children with special needs, among others. However, it was concluded that there was still an urgent need to ensure that policies and strategies translated into concrete actions so that there was a change in institutional practices and pedagogical approaches in the school and the classroom.

39. The representative of ILO stated that 1 out of every 10 people in the world had a disability representing about 470 million persons of working age. Social exclusion from the workplace deprived societies an estimated US\$1.37-1.94 trillion in GDP. The primary goal of ILO was to promote decent work for everyone including persons with disabilities. As such, there were certain strategies that should be developed in every workplace in order to provide a decent working environment for persons with disabilities. He stated that strategies should be formulated in accordance with national legislation, policy and practice and should be brought to the attention of all employees. There should also be support services for people with disabilities in the workplace such as mentoring, transportation, access to information, health services, vocational/career guidance and accessibility and adaptation to buildings and workstations.

40. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago highlighted the fact that all people were ageing and as they got older, there was the possibility that they might become disabled. It should also be noted that the disabled were also ageing. The reality in the Caribbean was that there were a significant proportion of elderly persons with a disability. Even though, most countries in the subregion had an ageing and/or disability policy, those should be regularly reviewed to address dynamic and changing social conditions. Furthermore, one good way to advocate for persons with disabilities was to include those persons in the work place. The presenter recommended that institutional arrangements should be supported by cultural readiness. She also recommended training and degree programmes for the caregivers.

41. The representative of ILO stated that if countries ratified the CRPD, they would be required to report on implementation progress. However, national legislation was important to give substance to the commitments under the CRPD.

42. The representative of OHCHR stated that ratification of Conventions was sometimes the best way that States Parties could push their agenda since there was a time frame for States Parties to implement their deliverables.

6. Panel II – Risk, rights and vulnerable groups

43. The representative of UNDP stated that all disasters had a human element as they were effects of human actions and inactions. The response systems for disasters in the Caribbean indicated that, to a large extent, there was need for early warning systems (EWS), evacuation systems, shelter management systems and recovery assistance. In relation to persons with disabilities, there was the need to invest in user friendly, and informative, EWS whereby there should be sign language in all packages that provided instructions for disaster responses and coded lights and vibrating alert systems for the hearing impaired. Furthermore, all emergency shelters should have back-up electrical power to cater for the medical needs of people with disabilities. It was recommended that new disaster risk management legislation must include special measures for special and more vulnerable categories including older persons, persons with disabilities and women. Persons with disabilities should also be included in the planning and design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation.

44. According to the representative of UNICEF, census data from four countries in the Caribbean showed that disabilities in children in the 0-4 age cohort ranged from 0.6% of the male population (Antigua and Barbuda) and 0.6% in the female population (Trinidad and Tobago) and in the 5-19 age cohort from 1.7% of the male population (Trinidad and Tobago) to 2.3% of the female population (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). A major concern for the United Nations, in general, and UNICEF, specifically, was that in the Latin American and Caribbean region, children with disabilities were not as 'visible' as they should be. One reason for this was that the detailed information and current data which was necessary to give a comprehensive analysis of the extent and scope of children with disabilities in the region was limited or unavailable. It was recommended that more countries needed to implement legislation to protect the legal, social, political and economic rights of children with disabilities. There should also be early identification and assessment of disabilities among children and the provision of pre-service and in-service training so that teachers could respond to the diversity in the classroom.

45. The representative of UNFPA looked at the situation of persons with disabilities with respect to their sexual and reproductive health and rights. It was noted that persons with disabilities were more vulnerable to sexual crimes and faced public ignorance and discrimination. As a result, they were less likely to have access to appropriate medical services, including mental/psychological and prophylactic care, and experienced forced sterilization, forced abortion and forced marriage. People with disabilities tended to have the worst health indicators, were often the poorest and least educated, and lacked access to medical and legal services. As such, sexual and reproductive health issues were critical to the physical well-being of persons with disabilities.

46. The representative of Guyana provided an account of his country's experience with a major flood in 2004 which highlighted the need to ensure that provisions were made for responding to the needs of persons with disabilities in times of disaster. He also underscored the value of involving persons with disabilities in developing disaster preparedness plans and ensuring that provisions were made for persons with disabilities.

47. The representative of Jamaica drew attention to an initiative which had been undertaken by her country in collaboration with UNFPA to disseminate information on sexual and reproductive health in an accessible format to persons with disabilities. She noted the value added by involving persons with disabilities and non-governmental organizations from the initial stages of the programme.

48. The representative of Guyana highlighted the conduct of annual research on sexual and reproductive health by the Ministry of Health and UNFPA as a best practice in his country. He noted that that research targeted young persons with disabilities and had assisted in providing a sound assessment of their awareness of issues related to sexual and reproductive health.

49. Participants made several contributions to the discussions on the issue of parenting and challenges faced by parents with respect to sexual and physical abuse of children with disabilities.

50. A significant part of the discussion was devoted to the integration of programmes for children with disabilities into mainstream programmes and policies. Country representatives reported on national early detection and intervention programmes that enabled the early diagnosis of disabilities. For the most part, those early detection programmes were instituted through the ministry of health at the level of hospitals and health clinics. Some countries also identified programmes that were executed by the ministry of education that enabled the diagnosis of children with intellectual or development disabilities.

7. Panel III – Planning frameworks

51. The representative of CARICOM made a presentation on regional initiatives which complemented and supported the implementation of the CRPD in the region. She provided some background on the role and mandates of CARICOM and identified the various policies and legislative frameworks that had been instituted in the subregion to address the needs of persons with disabilities. She drew attention to the Charter of Civil Society for the Caribbean Community that had been designed in 1997 as an instrument for guiding the development process in the Caribbean and highlighted some of the key articles of the Charter that pertained to the rights of persons with disabilities, human rights, generally, as well as women and children. She noted the commitments that had been made through the Kingston Accord and the Regional Framework for Action on Children.

52. The representative of Jamaica reflected on the evolution of thinking on disability issues over time and highlighted specifically the shift from the medical model paradigm to a human rights paradigm or social model. She identified the institutional and legislative frameworks that had been enacted by countries across the subregion in line with the CRPD and lamented shortcomings that had been identified across the subregion. She elaborated on a few best practices in Jamaica such as the inclusion of a disability subsector plan within the Vision 2030- National Development Plan and the disability registry for data collection on persons with disabilities. She also listed a few key recommendations that should be considered both at a national and regional level in addressing the needs of persons with disabilities.

53. The representative of Aruba summarized the key findings of the recently conducted population and housing census. She provided a synopsis of the enumeration exercise but emphasized, in particular, the methodology employed for collecting data on persons with disabilities. Preliminary estimates from the 2010 census indicated that there was a higher prevalence of disabilities among females than males. The data also revealed that a majority of persons (approximately 43.7%) suffered from sight-related disabilities and that the majority of disabilities were developed at birth. In addition to addressing the issue of data collection, she outlined some of the initiatives to be undertaken by the Ministry of Social Affairs to advance the disability agenda. Included among those were the recent institutionalization of the Special Needs Unit within the ministry and the development of a National Plan of Action on Disability.

54. In response to the presentations by the panellists, the representative of the British Virgin Islands enquired about electronic access to national development plans alluded to by the representative of Jamaica. In response, the representative of Jamaica directed meeting participants to the resources and documents that were available on the government website.

55. The representative of DESA noted the challenges that were normally faced when trying to get more countries to broaden surveys to cover pertinent issues of disability and ageing. He noted the limitations of censuses in identifying persons with disabilities and cited that in most instances, up to 10% of persons were unaccounted for through this enumeration process. He, therefore, proposed the inclusion of a few additional questions in regular surveys such as the quarterly household surveys as an efficient means of monitoring persons with disabilities. He referred to the presentation made by the representative of Aruba and emphasized that while the broadening of surveys and inclusion of additional questions increased the costs of the survey, national statistical offices had responsibility for ensuring that those additional costs were factored in their planning processes.

56. With regard to the Kingston Accord, the representative of CARICOM noted that little progress had been made since the proposal was made at the Caribbean Ministerial Conference in 2004. She stated that the onus was on member States to implement regional commitments and appealed to them to play a more proactive role in ensuring that the issues agreed to under the Accord were tabled at the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) session. She referred to the special COHSOD on children that had developed the Regional Framework for Action on Children.

Implementation of that Framework was being coordinated under the Caribbean Cooperation in Health mechanism.

57. The representative of Guyana registered his concerns about the lack of awareness among groups of people with disabilities of those key issues discussed at a ministerial level. He highlighted the need for better coordination between ministries and non-governmental organizations in ensuring a better flow of information.

8. Panel IV – Empowerment and disability

58. The representative of ECLAC focused on the issues related to gender and disability. She explained the concept of gender (that it addressed the roles of both women and men) and elaborated on the value of understanding the concept as a cross-cutting variable. Statistics from international agencies showed gender disparities that existed in terms of access and vulnerabilities among persons with disabilities. In that regard, the special case of women with disabilities and their particular vulnerabilities was highlighted. On those grounds, she noted the importance of implementing the CRPD and other frameworks that emphasized equality and the rights of persons with disabilities. She further underscored the need for greater advocacy and awareness building, more rigorous implementation of national policies and monitoring and evaluation as key actions in advancing the implementation of the CRPD.

59. In her presentation on technology and disability, the representative of Trinidad and Tobago outlined the key obligations contained in article 4 of the CRPD that related to the development, promotion and use of assistive technologies for persons with disabilities. She stressed the importance of assistive technologies in supporting greater participation and social inclusion, providing greater access to information and promoting greater independence. A number of different applications, software and devices that could assist with improving the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities were identified. These included GPS devices for blind and visually impaired, specialized keyboards, speech synthesizers, JAWS software programme and Braille word processors.

60. The representative of ESCAP addressed, specifically, the efforts and initiatives that had been undertaken in Asia and the Pacific to tackle issues of social protection among persons with disabilities. He noted the value of employing a holistic approach that encompassed both formal and informal strategies. At a national level, he noted the leading role played by non-governmental organizations and disabled persons' organizations in raising awareness and driving policy responses. Regionally, the ESCAP Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for All Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (BMF) represented a significant commitment to the full participation and equality of persons with disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region. Pacific regional organizations and non-governmental organizations as well as national disabled persons' organizations had made good use of the BMF to promote awareness of the human rights of persons with disabilities and the BMF became a useful tool to mobilize regional resources. He noted that many Pacific Island countries had used the BMF as a policy tool to address national concerns. He concluded by drawing attention to the value added by involving persons with disabilities at all stages of the planning and implementation process and highlighted the opportunities for south-south cooperation between Pacific Island and Caribbean countries.

61. In the discussion that ensued, participants registered concerns about the challenges that were encountered locally with providing protection for persons with disabilities. In particular, they spoke to the type of abusive situations and hardships that persons with disabilities encountered at the hands of their caregivers. Participants, however, agreed that there was an even more insurmountable challenge in getting the necessary support for those victims and their families. Some participants identified some initiatives that had yielded some success in dealing with those issues. The representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis indicated that through regular visits to the homes of older persons, the social welfare department was able to develop sound rapport with beneficiaries and had

become more aware of domestic situations. The regular visits also served to avert any potential abuse from caregivers.

62. The representative of DESA also noted the usefulness of assistive devices as a means of remaining in contact with persons with disabilities.

63. The representative of Guyana sought clarification on the use of assistive technologies and how training was provided for persons with disabilities. In response, the panellist noted that assessing persons with disabilities to determine his/her potential and ability to use any assistive device was a necessary prerequisite.

64. The representative of the Cayman Islands shared his country's experiences with the Dragon Speech Recognition Technology and cited some issues that users encountered regarding that technology.

65. The representative of ECLAC addressed the issues of unpaid work highlighted in the presentation on gender and disability. She spoke of the lack of national studies on unpaid work but noted the efforts being made in Guyana through the Red Thread organization that enabled the quantification of unpaid work.

9. Summary and closing

66. The meeting concluded with a summary of the main recommendations from the discussions from the representative of DESA and closing statements from the representative of ECLAC.

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F. Intergovernmental Organizations

Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

- Halima-Sa'adia Kassim, Deputy Programme Manager (Gender). Email: hkassim@caricom.org

G. Non-Governmental Organizations

Disabled Peoples' International (DPI)

- Kenneth McKell, Chairman, Annual General Meeting and Compliance Steering Committee (ACSC), Trinidad and Tobago Chapter of Disabled Peoples' International (TTDPI). Email: dpi_tt@yahoo.com | kmckell@flowtrinidad.net

H. Regional Institutions

The University of the West Indies (UWI)

- Innette Cambridge, Senior Advisor and Co-ordinator, Social Policy Programme and Disability Studies Unit, Department of Behavioural Sciences. Email: innette.cambridge@sta.uwi.edu
- Maria Thomas, Lecturer in Disability Studies, Disability Studies Unit, Department of Behavioural Sciences. Email: mdtspeced@gmail.com

I. Observers

- Fiona Walls, Senior Lecturer, Education, James Cook University, Australia. Email: Fiona.walls@jcu.edu.au

J. Secretariat

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

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