Country Statement: Forward-looking policies to accelerate the implementation of the Incheon Strategy under Item 9

Chair,

Excellences,

And Distinguished Delegates

- Since becoming a signatory to the Incheon Strategy in the late 2012, Fiji has progressed in legislations and policies on the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Fiji has been fortunate to have the *Fiji National Disability Policy* (2008 – 2018), the purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for addressing disability in Fiji and to develop a more ‘inclusive’ society,
create greater awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and identify priority areas for action to dismantle barriers hindering the full participation of people with disabilities in the social and economic life of the Fiji Islands. The policy reflects the priorities and views of the people of Fiji from many communities throughout the islands of Fiji. (Source: Fiji’s response to Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights with regard to the HRC resolution 28/4 on the rights of persons with disabilities.)

- On 7th June, 2017 the UNCRPD instruments was deposited by the Honorable Prime Minister of Fiji, in New York following the endorsement of Fiji’s parliament on 22nd March, 2017.
- The formulation of the new Disability Rights legislation in 2013, now known as Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2016 that is aligned to the Convention, awaiting final endorsement from Parliament in 2018. Most of the salient features of the UNCRPD are incorporated into the 2016 Bill.

- Following elections in 2014, the Fijian Government committed to a Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.
- Goal 7 (Ensure disability disaster preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction) of the Incheon Strategy is linked to STG Goals nos.1, 9, 11, and 13 and involvement of persons with disabilities in the decision making process as stipulated in the 2014 Sendai Framework.
- The Fijian government has invented that the use of gender and social lenses is key for inclusiveness to all development agenda.
- Ladies and gentlemen, the smart preparation by the Multi sectorial working group with the Fiji Election Office in preparation for the 2018 general election, made a resounding achievement towards making all polling stations disability friendly.
• In the field of Inclusive Sports, the Ministry of Youth through Sports Commission leads the implementation with the wonderful financial support of USD$100,000 received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea through the UNOSDP. The donors are adamant that this funding promotes activities from which a curriculum will be formed. This will go a long way to ensure that we meet our commitments as we strengthen our advocacy for inclusive sports.

• Sirs and Madams, just to highlight a great achievement in the field of sports. In the years 2015 and 2016, two women with disabilities received the highest recognition, as the Sports Women of the Year Award back to back. (Esther Moli [Special Olympics] Mere Roden)

• The other being the back to back Sports men award of 2011/2012 by Iliesa Delana a person with disability, who is now the Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports.

• We are also keen on ensuring that Fijian women living with disabilities are given equal opportunities when it comes to promoting women’s economic empowerment. We have a number of women’s groups formed by women living with disabilities who have been assisted by the Ministry to establish and run income generating projects for their livelihoods, whereby they use their artistic abilities and skills to craft and design products which they sell. Screen printing has proven to be a viable business of this nature for them.

• Early this year, there is sign language interpretation during live television parliamentary sessions.
• Climate change cannot be complete, if people with disabilities was not adequately covered in the recent COP 23, in Bonn Germany

To conclude, the Fijian Government’s mantra in ensuring that “No one is Left Behind” was a key pillar by the President of COP 23 – Honorable Prime Minister.

Thank you