



November 1, 2013

Dear Senator:

I write to convey the Women's Refugee Commission's strong support for Senate ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD is an important tool for ensuring the equality and inclusion of all people with disabilities, including those affected by conflict and crises.

Article 11 of the Convention highlights the need to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk such as armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters. The World Health Organization has estimated that 15 percent of any population are persons with disabilities. This percentage is likely to be even higher in conflicts or natural disasters that result in new impairments for large numbers of people—for example, the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the current conflict in Syria.

In our work, the Women's Refugee Commission has found that refugees and internally displaced persons with disabilities face especially grave protection challenges, have significant difficulty accessing assistance and services, and are often excluded from community decision making processes. As a leading provider of humanitarian and development assistance, the United States can help ensure the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in life-saving humanitarian programs and in recovery and development efforts. Ratification of the Convention would further enhance U.S. leadership on this vital human rights issue and strengthen our country's advocacy on and support for effective implementation of the Convention globally, including in crisis settings.

We hope the Senate will move swiftly to ratify the Convention and respectfully request your leadership and support on this important issue. If you have additional questions about the Women's Refugee Commission's work on behalf of displaced persons with disabilities, please contact Joan Timoney at JoanT@wrcommission.org.

Sincerely,

Sarah Costa
Executive Director