

Reporting Guidance for Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs): Tips for Reporting on Disability Inclusive Development and Implementation of Article 32 of the CRPD

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD Committee) has provided guidance on the participation of OPDs and civil society in its work. This may be found on the [webpage of the CRPD Committee](#).

In sum, the Committee encourages contributions by civil society organizations (e.g., local, national, international) to provide country-specific information on issues relevant to the implementation of the CRPD in the months prior to the adoption of the List of Issues or the examination of the State Party’s report and provides other opportunities for participation in the work of the Committee. Written information should be concise, specific, reliable, and as objective as possible and should:

- Highlight priority concerns and suggest possible country-specific recommendations to facilitate the work of the Committee.
- "Alternative reports," which follow the same form of presentation as reports submitted by countries, are especially welcome.
- Reports prepared by **coalitions of organizations** are encouraged.

The benchmarking table below goes through a set of criteria for assessing civil society reports and processes, provides a rationale for each criterion and an explanation as to the relevance of the criterion for the CRPD Committee and its work.

| Legitimacy and Credibility of Civil Society Reporting | | |
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| Benchmark | Rationale | CRPD Committee Considerations |
| Methodological soundness | The rationale for this benchmark is that it helps establish the reliability and credibility of the information provided in the report. It provides an indication as to the depth of consultation undertaken in the preparation of the report. Questions to consider include: Is the information provided in the human rights reporting credible? Is it backed up by sources? Does the human rights reporting process facilitate the creation of reliable information? Is the information referenced? Are sources for the information properly cited? | The Committee in its guidelines for civil society reporting emphasize the importance of providing “reliable information” that is “as objective as possible.” Thus, methodological soundness is an important element of the process and should be clearly explained in the report. |

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| Contribution by a coalition | The rationale for this benchmark is that coalitions have a more powerful voice, can better reflect human rights country conditions for persons with disabilities, and can reduce the amount of information the Committee must sort through in preparing for the interactive dialogue with States. | The CRPD Committee emphasizes in its guidelines on civil society contributions the value of coalition reports. |
| Independence of shadow reporting organization(s) and authors (from government) | The rationale for this benchmark is to ensure that civil society organizations participating in the reporting process and developing their own report must be independent of government. Questions include: Is the organization(s) responsible for drafting the report independent from the government and free from other conflicts of interest? Are the drafters of the report also independent of government and free from conflict of interest? | Treaty bodies expect that information submitted by civil society organizations reflects independent sources, free of government interference. The central purpose is to obtain information reflecting the different, on the ground view of civil society organizations. |
| Substance of Civil Society Reports | | |
| Specific linkage to CRPD standards | The rationale for this benchmark is to ensure Is the reporting methodology rooted in human rights obligations (for example, using the specific treaty against which the government is being assessed in the shadow report as the primary benchmark)? | The role of the Committee in its review of State reports is to assess whether and how the State is meeting its treaty obligations. To that end, the Committee must be able to assess what standards are at issue and civil society reports must clearly link their analysis of country conditions to specific CRPD obligations. |
| Articulation of clear, country-specific recommendations | The rationale for this benchmark is to ensure that recommendations provided are not done in the abstract, but rather are directed to the specific country in question. | The CRPD Committee emphasizes the need for recommendations to be tailored to a specific country and to be clear. |
| Dissemination of Civil Society Reports | | |
| Accessible formats | Is the shadow report available in accessible formats? (For example, Word version, plain language/easy read, electronic version/readable PDF, sign language format)? | Article 49 on Accessible Formats of the CRPD together with Article 9 on Accessibility underscore the importance of ensuring that information is provided in |

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| | | accessible formats, to reach as many people as possible, whatever their disability. This could mean providing a shadow report in Braille, plain language/easy read format, large print, electronic, among other formats. |
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Review and Commentary on Committee Guidance on Article 32 Reporting

The CRPD Committee in its reporting guidelines to State lists a number of questions to guide States Parties in their Reporting on Article 32. These should be consulted and supplemented by civil society organizations in reporting on Article 32 implementation by States. What follows are the specific questions issued by the CRPD Committee in its guidance on Article 32, followed by additional tips and commentary for OPDs.

1. What measures have been taken to guarantee that international cooperation be inclusive and accessible by persons with disabilities?

Commentary: Here, the Committee will want to understand whether a country has adopted a policy on disability inclusion if it is a donor country and whether it has a policy on disability inclusion in relation to the receipt of international development funding for developing countries who receive development funding. Civil society organizations should research relevant law and policy addressing disability inclusion in development cooperation.

2. Measures taken to guarantee that donor funds are properly used by recipient States (including by providing examples, numbers and percentages of successful targeted funding)

Commentary: Here, the Committee wants to understand whether States that give donor funding or States that receive funding are actually monitoring the use of those funding for disability inclusion. Questions to consider are whether there are any monitoring reports on disability inclusion in development programs. Are there evaluations undertaken of disability inclusive development projects to ascertain if the projects have impact? OPDs could also assess in their own community donor funded projects to find out, for example, if schools or health clinics or other facilities built with donor funding are accessible. They might find out if local development projects are actually serving beneficiaries with disabilities (micro-enterprise, agricultural projects, water sector operations, etc.)

3. Programmes and projects which specifically target persons with disabilities and the percentage of the total budget allocated to them.

Commentary: Here the Committee is interested in knowing whether specific development projects that target persons with disabilities are being funded and what percentage of development funding is allocated to such disability focused projects. It is recognized that disability inclusive development will entail two approaches. First, the mainstreaming of disability into all development projects and two, the targeting of persons with disabilities in specific programs. This is the “twin track approach” and civil society organizations should assess both types of programs – mainstream and disability-specific.

4. Affirmative-action measures taken towards the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups among persons with disability, such as women, children, etc.

Commentary: This is a general question that should be applied to scrutinize and monitor all phases of a development project to assess whether and how the program is inclusive of and accommodating to participants with disabilities – whatever their role, as development workers, development implementers, beneficiaries of a development project in a community, etc.

5. Degree of participation of persons with disabilities in the design, development and evaluation of programmes and projects.

Commentary: Here the Committee is interested in knowing about stakeholder engagement in development. In other words, to what extent are persons with disabilities being consulted and meaningfully participating in all phases of development. This recognizes the role accorded to persons with disabilities in Article 4(3) of the CRPD which recognizes the role of person with disabilities in participating in decision that affect them. Some donor organizations have specific stakeholder engagement requirements that are disability-inclusive (for example the World Bank). Beyond knowing whether a donor has a policy of stakeholder engagement, it is important to assess whether they are actually meeting that obligation.

6. Degree of mainstreamed action towards persons with disabilities in the general programmes and projects developed.

Commentary: Here the Committee is interested in knowing whether and how disability inclusion is being mainstreamed in development programs across all sectors. This is an important element of the twin track approach to disability inclusive development, and it recognizes that the vast majority of development cooperation projects are mainstream, large programs that should be inclusive of persons with disabilities, whether education, water and sanitation, health, employment, democracy and governance, transport, urban development, agriculture or any other sector of development.

7. Actions toward facilitating and supporting capacity-building, including through the exchange, and sharing of information, experiences, training programmes and best practices.

Commentary: Here the Committee is interested in knowing how governments are actively supporting the capacity building of organizations of persons with disabilities, leaders from the disability community, among others. Funding of international cooperation very often supports exchanges, civil society capacity building, training, sharing best practices. All of these efforts should both include persons with disabilities and develop targeted programs specifically benefiting persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

8. Whether policies and programmes targeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) take into account the rights of persons with disabilities.

Commentary: Here the Committee is interested in knowing whether the most important global policy framework on development is being implemented in a way that ensure the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The predecessor MDGs was not disability inclusive. However, the SDGs are far more disability inclusive and have targets and indicators that are explicitly disability inclusive. In that regard, projects funding the support of the SDGs must be disability inclusive to comply with the commitments undertaken by States.

9. On the development, progress, and effectiveness of programmes for the exchange of technical know-how and expertise for the assistance of persons with disabilities.

Commentary: Here the Committee is interested in knowing specifically about programming that supports, through international cooperation, technical knowledge and understanding of assistance of persons with disabilities to facilitate their full participation in society. Many countries have little experience in supporting persons with disabilities consistent with the CRPD, hence the importance of this type of international cooperation assistance.

General Guidance for Civil Society Organizations in Undertaking Reporting and Information Submission to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities issued Guidance on the participation of disabled persons' organizations and civil society organizations in the various procedures it undertakes, including the reporting process. The link is provided here on the [webpage of the CRPC Committee](#).

The Committee especially welcomes “efforts to contribute to the Committee’s work by organizations representing persons with disabilities, including organizations representing women and children with disabilities.”

The Committee defines “disabled persons’ organizations as those comprising a majority of persons with disabilities – at least half their membership – and governed, led and directed by persons with disabilities.”

Committee Guidance on the Participation in the reporting procedure for the review of State party reports

The substantive core of the Committee’s guidelines is reproduced below followed by useful tips and commentary in the text boxes.

Written submissions

The Committee welcomes all written submissions with country-specific information relevant to the review of State party reports, in accordance with article 35 of the Convention. To ensure that the Committee receives such submissions at an appropriate stage of the procedure, they should be made at one or more of the following times:

(a) Before or after the State party submits its report;

Commentary: Note that the Committee welcomes submissions by OPDs before or after the State Party submits its report. Where a government is timely in preparing its Report to the Committee, OPDs will have the benefit of reviewing the State’s report and analyzing it as part of the OPD review. This will better enable the OPD to fill in gaps and correct the record where the State may not be accurate in its reporting. ON the other hand, where a State is delayed in submitting its report, OPDs may wish to proceed with their own process to ensure they have enough time prior to the onset of the reporting process by the CRPD Committee.

(b) Before the adoption of the list of issues;

Commentary: Note the Committee also welcomes written submissions during the phase of the reporting process known as the “Adoption of the List of Issues.”

(c) After the State party has submitted its replies to the list of issues and before the constructive dialogue;

Commentary: Written submissions at this stage by OPDs may be helpful in highlighting for the Committee issues that it may want to raise during the interactive dialogue in Geneva.

(d) Before the Committee adopts the list of issues in accordance with its simplified reporting procedure.

Commentary: Written submissions at this stage by OPDs can assist the Committee in developing its List of Issues.

Timeline

The Committee invites disabled persons' organizations and civil society organizations to make timely written submissions, to ensure that they can be fully taken into account by the Committee experts, as follows:

- (a) As early as possible and up to three weeks before the opening of a session;
- (b) Submissions will be accepted up to one day before a session; however, owing to time restraints, it is not guaranteed that such submissions will be considered by the members of the Committee;
- (c) In the case of the adoption of lists of issues, in accordance with the simplified reporting procedure, submissions may be received by the secretariat up to four months prior to the beginning of the session at which the list of issues will be adopted.

Commentary: Again, the Committee will receive information in the months leading up to the adoption of the List of Issues by the Committee which is the first stage in the reporting process and sets the stage for the Interactive Dialogue.

Disclaimer

Submissions are the sole responsibility of the submitting organizations and in no way will their reception by the Committee signify its endorsement thereof or its adoption of any position regarding their contents.

Commentary: It is up to the Committee to decide in what way it will utilize the information provided by OPDs and civil society organizations. It is important to note that the Committee does regularly draw upon information provided by civil society in its work, including in its formulation of recommendations to Governments.

Publicity on the Committee’s website

Submissions will be posted automatically, unless the submitting organization clearly requests confidentiality.

Commentary: Should the organization wish to remain anonymous; it must make it clear to the Committee that its report should not be posted to the CRPD Committee website.

Length

The Committee recommends that documents be focused and concise, suggesting that their length be limited as follows:

- (a) A maximum of 10,700 words for alternative reports to the State Party reports;
- (b) A maximum of 5,350 words for other submissions.

Commentary: The lengths are suggestions but should serve as a rough guide. The Committee must sift through thousands of pages of documents for each State review and thus being concise is an important part of ensuring the civil society report will be fully digested by the Committee.

Structure

The Committee strongly recommends that written submissions take the following form:

- (a) Identification of the submitting organization, brief description of its activities at international and/or national level, mission/vision statement and the role played by persons with disabilities in the organization, and the level of inclusiveness and participation of persons with disabilities in the drafting of the submission;
- (b) Executive summary, no longer than one page;
- (c) Make reference to specific articles of the Convention addressed in the submission;
- (d) Propose recommendations.

Please note that requirements (a) and (b) are not taken into account for the purposes of the length limits recommended in paragraph 9 of the present guidelines.

Commentary: The structure is recommended not required but it is important to note that the Committee’s guidance roughly follows guidance provided to States in terms of referencing specific CRPD articles. In addition, the Committee is interested in specific recommendations given that it is required to provide States with concluding observations as well as recommendations.

Format and languages

Written submissions should be provided in accessible digital or electronic formats, for example Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format; hard copies are not necessary since the Committee has fully adopted the United Nations greening policy.

Submissions should be written in one of the Committee's working languages. The Committee encourages the submission of executive summaries in English. Please note that Conference Services does not translate documents submitted by organizations.

Commentary: Note the absence of translation services. Ideally the information will be provided in one of the official UN languages as possible or, if not possible, a summary in English is helpful to the Committee.

Briefings

Applications

Disabled persons' organizations and civil society organizations applying for a briefing meeting shall submit a request up to four weeks before the session, indicating:

- (a) The name of the organization: coalitions are encouraged to give a brief description of their component organizations, and, in particular, their mission/vision statement and the role played by persons with disabilities in the organization;
- (b) The title of the briefing event;
- (c) A brief description of the topics to be addressed during the country-specific briefing;
- (d) The preferred date and time for the briefing event; the only possible times available for briefings are from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m., and from 13:45 to 14:45 p.m. during sessional weeks; and prior to the adoption of list of issues during the pre-sessional working group;
- (e) Name and function of the speaker(s).

Commentary: Briefing applications must be complete, and all information requested must be provided.

Remote presentations

Oral presentations may be given remotely, via video conference. Owing to United Nations financial constraints, organizations must indicate the mode of presentation four weeks prior to the date of the briefing, and the necessary telecommunication technology that they will be providing.

Commentary: This is a helpful alternative to being in Geneva and is clearly far less expensive as an option of reaching the Committee.

Accessibility

Applicant organizations shall indicate whether they will provide translations, captioning, sign language interpretation, Braille documentation, easy-to-read text and/or other accessibility tools.

Statements

Speakers are requested to submit statements of their contributions to the secretariat up to one day prior to the briefing event.

Overlapping meetings

The Committee's secretariat will allocate time slots after consultation with the Chair of the Committee. Since democracy is a basic principle of the Committee, time will be equally distributed among all applicant organizations. Priority will be given to those applicant organizations that have also submitted written information. The order of statements will be: country-based disabled persons' organizations, national coalitions, international disabled persons' organizations and other civil society organizations.

Commentary: Here it is important to note the importance that the Committee attaches to local organizations of persons with disabilities.

Venue of briefings

All briefings shall take place in the conference room where the Committee holds its sessions.

Commentary: Here it can be noted that the CRPD Committee conference room is accessible.

Thematic briefings

Disabled persons' organizations and civil society organizations may request briefing time for particular themes to which they may wish to draw the Committee's attention.

Commentary: While the Committee's time for side events is limited, there is the potential to hold a thematically focused briefing to draw attention to a particular issue. This should be organized ideally with the full support and knowledge of one of the Committee members.