MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, 3 DECEMBER 2021

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Disabled Peoples' International Global Chair

Theme: *Leadership and Participation of Persons with Disabilities Toward an Inclusive, Accessible and Sustainable Post-COVID-19 World*

Dear Brothers and Sisters, our fellows with disabilities around the world,

On behalf of Disabled Peoples' International (DPI), and in my capacity as DPI Global Chair, I would like to extend my warmest and most sincere greetings on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities of 2021.

This year, we are celebrating our disability community, as the world is reaching the end of the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic. For the last two years, our family of brothers and sisters with all types of disabilities continue to face the drastic outcomes of this pandemic. You have been struggling with many challenges of prevailing neglect, exclusion, discrimination, and perpetual stigmatization and inequality.

The end of 2021 would mark 7 years of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Framework 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals. With 8 years still to go for 2030, and we cannot deny that the world is still witnessing major gaps on the level of disability inclusion. Yes, over the last 7 years, and since the adoption of the CRPD in 2006, we have been witnessing remarkable progress in terms of the recognition by governments, UN Agencies, donors, and international organizations of our presence persons with disabilities. However, we strongly believe that the journey is still too long ahead of us, as we continue to strive for reaching our goal of full recognition, equal representation, and systematic inclusion on all levels, mainly in the Global South.

We at DPI are committed to continuing our leadership role towards the achievement of this goal and striving to offer our disabled brothers and sisters as, and their families. This includes all the support they need to remain resilient and strong during their journey. Our DPI family is continuing its effort to revive its presence as the largest international organization of national assemblies of cross-cutting grassroots organizations of persons with disabilities.

The organization today is finalizing its plan for holding its World Assembly in South Korea in 2023, where all DPI family members of all backgrounds and views will come together to consolidate our resources and work together as one organization of empowered membership.

Until then, we at DPI will continue to work hand in hand with our partners and friends at other International Organizations of persons with disabilities to ensure that disability rights do not remain neglected. We will continue our dialogue with UN agencies, governments, and donor institutions, to ensure that disability issues are systematically recognized and fully integrated within national, regional, and international policies and programs. We will continue our co-chairing of the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities to the Sustainable Development Goals alongside with our friends at the International Disability Alliance (IDA). This will ensure the quality representation of voices of persons with disabilities throughout the ongoing dialogue with the United Nations and its member states regarding the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

Finally, we at DPI are fully aware of the transformative impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic on the lives of persons with disabilities. We realize the critical shift towards the full dependence on technology during this time of crisis. Recognizing the tremendous progress in the arena of digital accessibility, we will continue our partnership with the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information Technologies (G3ICT) to make sure that our disabled brothers and sisters will have equal access to opportunities of digital accessibility education and advocacy leadership development through G3ICT programs and initiatives.

Brothers and sisters, again I extend DPI's most sincere greetings, wishing you all great success in your journey of advocacy, wherever you are.