



40th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council (25 February- 22 March 2019)

ITEM 3: Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child “Empowering children with disabilities for the enjoyment of their human rights, including through inclusive education”

Oral Statement submitted by Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23), NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC.

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Mr. President,

Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) welcomes the theme of the Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child “Empowering children with disabilities for the enjoyment of their human rights, including through inclusive education.”¹

The empowerment of a child with disability is closely related to inclusive education. Through education talents and skills are improved and every child is offered the tools to grow and develop his/her abilities for the benefit of the whole society.

Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes, Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility, rightly said that “the right to inclusive education means transforming culture, policy and practice in all formal and informal educational environments to ensure education is for all learners,” and that “inclusive education is important not only for persons with disabilities but the societies they live in, as it helps to combat discrimination, and to promote diversity and participation.”²

As Ms Catalina Devandas Aguilar, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stated that ‘our classrooms are mirrors of our societies’.³

“A truly inclusive society calls for an equally inclusive education.” “Inclusion works through the promotion of a society that respects the dignity of every human person and goes beyond criteria of efficiency “.⁴

For this reason, schools should be the place where the talents and resources of all are developed, where relationships can be vital elements for real integration and the classroom becomes a community environment characterized by a spirit of welcoming and cooperation.

Inclusion in the school setting can bring real benefit to the society as a whole, helping to build an environment in which no one is left behind.

As a result, we ask the distinguished panellists: What role the Civil Society can have in promoting inclusive education as a precious and essential resource to build a more inclusive society?

¹ A/HRC/RES 37/20

² <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20437&LangID=E>

³ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-liaison-office-in-new-york/about-this-office/single-view/news/inclusion_and_empowerment_of_persons_with_disabilities/

⁴ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/secretariat_state/2008/documents/rc_seg-st_20081126_unesco_en.html