



United States Mission to the United Nations

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Agenda Items 138 and 141: Pattern of Conferences and JIU Disabilities
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[Check Against Delivery]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States recognizes the important work of conference management support in enabling multilateralism at the United Nations. These professional efforts allow member states to conduct our negotiations effectively and with a modernized toolset. I would like to commend Department for General Assembly and Conference for the number of innovations they implement, from eLuna, to gMeets, they are changing the way the UN conference management does business. The United States is encouraged to see that such forward leaning and progressive thinking at the UN is implemented through modernized capabilities that advance the effectiveness and efficiency of the UN to deliver on its mandate.

Mr. Chairman, another critical component to the effective support of multilateralism and the work at the United Nations is ensuring accessibility by all including persons with disability. We welcome the JIU's report on this matter and its helpful recommendations. We fully agree with the report's findings that the UN needs to take on a more systemic approach to accessibility for all of its meetings including creating a standardized system of receiving accessibility requests for each meeting. While the report notes that there are no international standards for accessibility, we would encourage the UN to use existing standards such as universal design. Here in New York, the UN could also improve its accessibility by fully implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act. The report also discusses the need to more systemically address costs for accessibility improvements but it does not emphasize that many immediate changes are cost neutral. We resolved a cost neutral issue relatively easily through the GA revitalization process - now all delegates at all GA meetings will have an accessible seat as needed during any GA meetings without having to make special arrangements.

However, obstacles still remain for full accessibility for UN delegates. While the JIU recommendations are important overarching policy fixes, the report does not address the experience of delegates who are here every day and moving across UN rooms and meetings. My own delegation knows firsthand the challenges persons with disabilities face here in New York. Whether it is not being able to exit from a late night meeting because the only accessible way after 9 pm is a turnstyle or not being able to deliver a statement because there is no permanent solution for making the GA podium accessible, my delegation lives many of the challenges in the

report every day. Nonetheless, we are encouraged by progress we have made in the General Assembly. In addition to the revitalization resolution, we also welcome the Third Committee resolution, which focuses on accessibility this year. The resolution addresses many important initiatives that my delegation is involved with, including advancing the UN disability inclusion strategy and the accessibility steering committee, which adopted its own recommendations in June that more effectively address the needs of delegates. We encourage the JIU and other parts of the UN to also consider these recommendations.

As we prepare to observe the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, the United States looks forward to active and ongoing consideration of the breadth of issues associated with achieving full accessibility.

Mr. Chairman, I conclude by stressing the importance of consulting with persons with disabilities in all of these efforts, particularly those who are here working at the UN every day - whether as delegates, UN staff or civil society - in order to comprehensively implement these recommendations. We must be true to the spirit of the CRPD - nothing about us without us.

Thank you.